

Islam to the Modern Mind

Islam to the Modern Mind

Lectures in South Africa:
1970 & 1972

by

Mawlana Muhammad Fazl-ur-Rahman Ansari (ra)

Transcribed by
Mahdie Kriel

Edited by
Yasien Mohamed

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Mr Mahdie Kriel's phone calls came as a delightful surprise, informing me of his wonderful accomplishment in transcribing my esteemed father's lectures delivered by him during his missionary sojourn to South Africa.

The thought has prevailed for a long time to transcribe all his lectures but it could not be materialised. The credit goes to brother Mahdie Kriel who succeeded in this endeavour, *al-ḥamdu lillāh*.

I have perused the topics which form the contents of the book. These are indeed vital issues confronting the Muslim Ummah and need elucidation to satisfy the modern mind.

Knowledge is wisdom, and Islam holds a unique position amongst the world religions in emphasising the quest for knowledge. We have the verse from the Holy Qur'ān:

Whosoever is given wisdom, has indeed received much good, but none except the men of understanding are mindful.

(Q 2:269)

May Allāh (swt) bless us all with 'ilm nāfi' (useful knowledge); knowledge which is good for us and will lead us to the right path. May He also give us the opportunity to imbibe wisdom from the Holy Qur'ān and the *sunnah* which are the main springs of knowledge and guidance, *āmin*.

Once again my heartiest felicitation on this meritorious achievement to brother Mahdie Kriel and others associated with this project.

Jazākum Allāhi khayr al-jazā'

Mustafa Fazil Ansari
Jeddah
7 February 1998

Mawlana Fazl-ur-Rahman al-Ansari (may Allāh have mercy on him) visited the Cape in 1970 and 1972. On both occasions he delivered a series of lectures presenting an interpretation and understanding of Islam that caused thousands of people to flock to listen to him. For many of those who followed him from one mosque to the other, it was the first time that they had come across a perspective of Islam that stressed the tremendous spirituality of the religion.

The publication of these lectures is long overdue, and I am positive that

its impact will be as dramatic as his visits on both occasions. Mahdie Kriel and Yasien Mohamed have done this community a significant service by organizing this publication. I am sure that this work will contribute considerably to a better understanding of the teachings of the religion of Islam.

Prof Yusuf da Costa
December, 1997
Cape Town

*I*t is with great pleasure that we welcome the long awaited transcription of the dynamic lectures of one of the greatest intellectual and spiritual luminaries of the twentieth century. It is these dynamic, ever-relevant and concise lectures which had (and still have) a tremendous impact on my thinking. These lectures clear most of the doubts that are cast by religious bigots and narrow-minded reactionaries who masquerade their sectarian opinions as Law of God. The vibrancy and diversity of the discourses presented by Dr. *Mawlana* F.R. Ansari unlocks the true wisdom of the comprehensive nature of Islam.

Shaykh Sadullah Khan
Director: Masjid-ul-Quds Islamic Centre
PRO: Islamic College Of Southern Africa
Editor: Muslim Views

*T*he compilers of *Mawlana* Fazl-ur-Rahman al-Ansari's series of recorded lectures in written form deserve nothing less than our highest commendations.

At the turn of the twentieth century and in the present state of polarisation Muslims have few voices that can be more welcome than the moderating tones of mainstream Islam. *Mawlana* Ansari – neglected until recently – is one such voice. While as Muslims we reserve the right to constructively differ about details and particulars, there can be little doubt that it is the comprehensiveness of the vision of *Mawlana* Ansari – in the spirit of his own dynamic orthodoxy – that we as Muslims need to revisit and re-engage. It is this comprehensiveness of vision coupled with a dynamic interpretation which lead one scholar to observe that *Mawlana* Ansari, in the huge ocean

of Muslim scholarship, was like a 'whale amongst minnows'. It is in this spirit, too, that we receive the Ghazalians and Fakhr ud-Din Razis of our great classical heritage.

It is my view that the compilers of *Mawlana* Ansari's lectures have done justice to his comprehensiveness of vision. From the inclusion of, *inter alia*, broad discussions on the nature of Islam itself to particular discussions on the role and nature of women in Islam, and further challenging important discourses on *taṣawwuf* (Islamic Spirituality). This compilation will stand as highly recommended reading in the home of any Muslim concerned about his/her *dīn* in contemporary times.

In conclusion we make *du'ā* that *Allāhu Ta'ālā* grant the compilers and the original author their just rewards, *āmin*.

Shaykh Seraj Hendricks
Azzavia Mosque
Cape Town
26 January 1998

*I*t is indeed an honourable task to assist with the editing and to do the penultimate and final proof reading for a work of such a challenging nature.

Far more striking and unyielding though, is the indomitable persistence of *Mawlana* Fazl-ur-Rahman Ansari that we should live our lives only for the love of Allāh (swt) and the love for the Holy Prophet (ṣ) and in service to humanity, regardless of favour or adverse criticism.

I pray that this praiseworthy collection will find a way into the hearts and actions of all people who read this sincere and noble message of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (ṣ) re-echoed by the distinguished and renowned personality of Dr. *Mawlana* Fazl-ur-Rahman Ansari al-Qadiri.

May Allāh (swt) forgive any errors on my part in assisting the Editor to make this valuable collection readable and palatable. Finally, may Allāh (swt) further spur us, through this publication, to strive for success in this world and in the Hereafter, *āmin*.

Awaatief Daniels (MS)
February 1998
Cape Town

The noble idea of transcribing the lectures delivered by His Eminence Dr. *Mawlana* Muhammad Fazl-ur-Rahman Ansari Al-Qadiri (ra), during his lecture tours to South Africa in 1970 and 1972, was conceived by brother Mahdie Kriel, a disciple of His Eminence Muhammad Ja'fer Shaikh (ra). However, it is heartening to note that the fruits of his labour and dedication have finally taken shape in the form of a book. Brother Yasien Mohamed is to be congratulated for having performed the enormous task of editing His Eminence's message and teachings.

The lectures are as current today as they were in the 70s, because of the various topics and problems touched upon. According to His Eminence, the world badly needs for man 'to live soulfully – from within' and achieve this by leading a moral life cleansed from within (*tazkiyah*). His Eminence emphasises amongst others 'to give woman her rightful place in society as basically the equal of man', 'to crown labour with dignity' (good labour relations) and to proclaim the principle that 'value lies in labour productivity and achievement' (economic necessity).

The book needs widespread publicity and support. It must go international, as the message is for all mankind. My prayers are with all those who promote it.

***Mawlana* M.A. Khan**

Al-Kamil, Aleemiyah: M.A. Islamic Studies, Karachi.

Disciple of His Eminence Dr. *Mawlana* Muhammad Fazl-ur-Rahman Ansari Al-Qadiri (ra) and

Khalifah of His Eminence Muhammad Ja'fer Shaikh (ra)

Ramaḍān 1418 / 5 January 1998

ABBREVIATIONS

(swt) – *subḥānahu wa ta ‘ālā* : Glory be to The Most High.
Used as a mark of submission and humility.

(ṣ) – *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* : May the Peace and Blessings of Allāh be upon him.
Used whenever the name Muḥammad, Prophet, Nabī or Messenger is mentioned.

(as) – *alayhis salām* : On whom be peace.
Used for all Prophets mentioned in the Qur’ān.

(ra) – *raḍiallāhu ‘anhū / ‘anhā* : May Allāh be pleased with him/her.
Used whenever the Companions or the family of the Prophet is mentioned.

TRANSLITERATION NOTE

CONSONANTS

ا	<i>alif</i>		ض	<i>ḍād</i>	ḍ
ب	<i>bā'</i>	b	ط	<i>ṭā'</i>	ṭ
ت	<i>tā'</i>	t	ظ	<i>ẓā'</i>	ẓ
ث	<i>thā'</i>	th	ع	<i>'ayn</i>	'
ج	<i>jīm</i>	j	غ	<i>ghayn</i>	gh
ح	<i>ḥā'</i>	ḥ	ف	<i>fā'</i>	f
خ	<i>khā'</i>	kh	ق	<i>qāf</i>	q
د	<i>dāl</i>	d	ك	<i>kāf</i>	k
ذ	<i>dhāl</i>	dh	ل	<i>lām</i>	l
ر	<i>rā'</i>	r	م	<i>mīm</i>	m
ز	<i>zay</i>	z	ن	<i>nūn</i>	n
س	<i>sīn</i>	s	ه	<i>hā'</i>	h
ش	<i>shīn</i>	sh	و	<i>wāw</i>	w
ص	<i>ṣād</i>	ṣ	ی	<i>yā'</i>	y

(ء hamza ')

VOWELS

ا	<i>ā</i>	َ	<i>fatḥa</i>	a
و	<i>ū</i>	ُ	<i>ḍamma</i>	u
ی	<i>ī</i>	ِ	<i>kasra</i>	i

' = assimilated vowels

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Dr. *Mawlana* Fazl-ur-Rahman Ansari was an outstanding theologian and philosopher of the Muslim World. His broad knowledge of the modern sciences together with his Islamic learning and insight, enabled him to expound on Islam in a manner that was inspiring to both the masses and the intellectual elite.

As a missionary, *Mawlana* Ansari inspired Muslim minorities with fresh faith and zeal. During his five world missionary tours he affiliated forty organisations to the World Federation of Islamic Missions. The Muslim minorities in Latin America, Africa, South-East Asia and elsewhere were confronted by a hostile non-Muslim majority. Their only defence was their sentimental attachment to Islam. Ansari's intellectual exposition of Islam gave the bright young Muslims some hope that at least Islam is a dynamic, practical religion, that can face up to the challenges of the twentieth century. He knew that unless the Muslim minorities had their own religious scholars who were conversant with modern thought, their emotional attachment to Islam would not last long. With this in mind, he established the Aleemiyah Institute of Islamic Studies in Karachi where students could study both religious and modern sciences.

His Character

In relation to the different schools of Islamic thought, such as the Barelvies, the Deobandis and the Ahl al-Ḥadīth, he had an extremely broad outlook. Although he might have had his personal theological preference, he was not prejudiced towards any of these groups. In fact, he accepted that every individual has his/her own predisposition and inclination as a result of his/her own education and experience. It is these differences in personalities, which explains their variant opinions relating to particular matters. Hence the same verse of the Holy Qur'ān and the same *ḥadīth* of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) may have different meanings to different individuals. To be sure, it is difficult for man to rise above his own mental and psychological state. It is this recognition of differences in human nature, which made *Mawlana* Ansari an ideal example of tolerance and compassion towards all Muslims. He would speak to people with the utmost politeness and respect, no matter

what their station in life. At work, after assigning his subordinates with some task, he would politely request them, with a warm smile, to complete the task, even if the delay would cause him much loss.

His family traced their lineage to the companion of the Holy Prophet, Khālid Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, who is distinguished for his hospitality and at whose house the Holy Prophet stayed after his migration (*Al-Hijrah*) to Medina.

His Education

In 1921, at the age of six years, he completed the memorisation of the Holy Qur’ān at the Madrassah Islamiyah Muzaffar Nagar, U.P., India. In 1933 he enrolled for the BA Course at the Aligarh Muslim University with majors in English Literature, Philosophy and Arabic. At the same time from 1933–1936 he was following the Dars-e-Nizami course at the Aligarh Muslim University under the celebrated Islamic Scholar, Prof. Hazrat *Mawlana* Syed Sulaiman Ashraf, Chairman Dept of Theology. Here he undertook special studies in the Holy Qur’ān, the *ḥadīth*, *‘ilm al-kalām* (Islamic theology) and *taṣawwuf* (Islamic spirituality). By 1937, he had started learning his fifth language, German; and in the same year *Mawlana* ‘Abd al-Alīm Siddiqui sent him on his first missionary errand to Singapore and Malaysia. These countries required that the teachings of Islam be presented with force and eloquence in order to counteract the aggressive missionary activities of non-Muslims. That is where Hafiz Fazl-ur-Rahman, then an accomplished scholar and writer worked on three fronts: firstly, he edited the first English Islamic journal “Genuine Islam”, secondly, he was director of the All-Malaya Muslim Missionary Society, and thirdly, he organised Islamic propagation in the Far East in general.

In 1939 he obtained a scholarship from the Alexander Von Humboldt Stiftung of Berlin to proceed to Germany for higher studies. However, the Second World War put an end to these plans. So he then completed the Bachelor of Islamic Theology course of which he had already done one year in 1936. In 1942 he graduated with distinctions in his MA course in Philosophy with majors in Metaphysics, Ethics, Psychology, and classical Islamic Philosophy (from original sources). During that year he was also the Vice-President of the Philosophical Society of Aligarh Muslim University.

After working for five long years on his PhD, he finally submitted the dissertation to his supervisor, Dr. S.Z. Hasan of the Aligarh University. However, Dr. Hasan had settled in Karachi just before Pakistan was established in 1947. Dr. Hasan passed away soon thereafter and the dissertation of *Mawlana* Ansari

could not be found among his belongings. And when *Mawlana* Ansari migrated to Pakistan in November, 1947, his library was looted and destroyed at Amritsar. How sad, the fruit of years of laborious and painstaking research had been destroyed. This was a great loss of valuable research as Dr. Hasan himself said: "For some time he has now been working with me on a philosophic-religious theme for his Doctorate which I am sure is going to be a great dissertation. Dr. Sir Ziauddin, that eminent and celebrated mathematician and vice-chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University had this to say on 11 August, 1945: "I have great pleasure in testifying to the character and attainments of Mr. Hafiz Fazl-ur-Rahman Ansari ... who has made his mark as a scholar of exceptional talent and ability."

From the year 1933 to the year 1947, he remained at Aligarh. This spiritual pilgrim was so devoted to learning that as a BA student he used to read five hundred pages of reading every day, with the result that he became equally at home in a diverse field of subjects. He had also studied the various branches of Medicine, especially the Homeopathic System of Medicine, during his day at Aligarh. On 29th September, 1966 he was registered in Karachi as an authorised Practitioner of Homeopathy.

In 1970 he obtained his PhD under the supervision of Dr. M.M. Ahmed, Chairperson of the Department of Philosophy, University of Karachi. His topic was *The Islamic Moral Code and its Metaphysical Background*. The degree of PhD was granted to him in 1970. His dissertation was commented on by an eminent scholar as follows: "It is, indeed, a comprehensive account of the moral code provided by the Qur'ān, a like of which, to my knowledge, has not been formulated with such an extensiveness by anyone in the history of Muslim literature."

His Missionary Activity

In 1935 when Hafiz Fazl-ur-Rahman had just written his BA (final) exams, *Mawlana* 'Abd al-Alīm Siddiqui showed him an article written by a Christian priest and published in Singapore. This article maligned Islam and Hafiz Fazl-ur-Rahman requested permission to write a reply. *Mawlana* Siddiqui was extremely happy with his reply, and it was since then that the bond of love between them developed. In 1936 this bond was further cemented when *Mawlana* 'Abd al-Alīm gave his eldest daughter to him in marriage.

In the very next year, *Mawlana* 'Abd al-Alīm Siddiqui wrote a letter from Saudi Arabia stating that none of his children could carry on his work; and that the one

capable person, his son-in-law, had also forsaken him. On reading this letter, tears flowed freely from *Mawlana* Ansari's eyes. To this day, that tear-stained letter stands as testimony of the love and loyalty he had for that great saint, *Mawlana* 'Abd al-Alīm Siddiqui. It was at this time that *Mawlana* Siddiqui accepted his son-in-law as his *murīd* in all the *silsilahs*: Qadariyyah, Chistiyyah, Naqshabandiyyah, Suhrawardiyah and Shadhiliyyah. And within the precincts of the Ka'bah, *Mawlana* 'Abd al-Alīm transmitted to him *ijāzah* (authority) in all spiritual matters. Since 1932 to the day of *Mawlana* 'Abd al-Alīm's demise, it was Hafiz Fazl-ur-Rahman alone who stood as his right hand man in the fields of Islamic missionary journalism and practical missionary work.

In addition to these round the world tours, this illustrious missionary made other trips in the service of Islam. Most notable amongst these was the historic visit to South Africa in August-September, 1970; and the visit, first ever by a Muslim missionary, to the Indian Ocean Islands, Seychelles, in December 1970.

To realise the power of his expression, one has to read his writings. Here was a writer who wielded his pen with a mighty force. At the age of eighteen he wrote his first book, *The Beacon Light* (published in 1932). In here, he replied to a vicious attack on Islam by a Christian priest in Hong Kong. Many other works followed after this, the most notable being his most voluminous work, *The Qur'anic Foundations and Structure of Muslim Society* (1973), a work in two volumes covering more than nine hundred pages. This historic book was launched on 1st December, 1973. Six months later *Mawlana* Dr. Fazl-ur-Rahman Ansari passed away.

His five round world tours took him to about forty different countries in Africa, America, Asia and Europe. There, his distinguished oratory and encyclopedic knowledge created a lasting impression on the minds of all – educated and uneducated, young and old, Muslim and non-Muslim. In many countries, he delivered lectures at universities where he addressed audiences which included eminent professors and orientalists, whose attacks on Islam he convincingly refuted. His death was a great loss to the world of Islam in general and to Pakistan in particular.

Yasien Mohamed
Frankfurt

EDITOR'S NOTE TO THE THIRD EDITION

This new edition is the same as the second edition in content, but it differs slightly in structure and form. The appendix of errata for the English and the Arabic have been removed, and these corrections have individually been inserted in their relevant pages. Thus, the book is relatively free of such errors, and people can now quote from the Arabic with confidence. The larger Arabic font in some places in the second edition has now been reduced in size in this third edition for the sake of uniformity.

The meanings of abbreviations used next to the names of Prophets and pious persons are provided, and they indicate a mark of respect. We hope the reader will forgive us for any short comings.

Professor Yasien Mohamed
Department of Foreign Languages (Arabic section)
University of the Western Cape
20th November 2002

FOREWORD

It is a great honour for me to write a foreword to this valuable collection of lectures delivered by *Mawlana* Dr. Fazl-ur-Rahman Ansari al-Qadiri (ra) in South Africa. I came to know Dr. Ansari when I enrolled as a student at the 'Aleemiyah Institute of Islamic Studies in Karachi, Pakistan, during the latter part of 1970 and until his demise in 1974. I also had the unique privilege to accompany him on one of his missionary tours to the Seychelles and Sri Lanka in 1973.

Dr. Ansari was a scholar, orator, missionary, teacher, author and a spiritual leader, *par excellence* – the like of whom we may never again witness. During his travels across the globe, he relentlessly endeavoured to focus on Muslim unity and through his lectures succeeded in inspiring the Muslim youth to return to the Qur'ān and to uphold the *Sunnah* of our beloved Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ).

Dr. Ansari's lectures in South Africa appealed to all sections of the Muslim community as well as to non-Muslims at the various academic institutions.

I commend both, brother Mahdie Kriel for undertaking the daunting task of transcribing and collating these lectures in one volume, and brother Yasien Mohamed for sparing some of his valuable time to edit them.

I am confident that this work will not only be well received by the Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa, but also by all those who are genuinely seeking the Truth.

Wa mā tawfīq illā bi Allāh.

Abul Fadl Mohsin Ebrahim
Associate Professor
Department of Islamic Studies
University of Durban-Westville

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All thanks and praises belong to Allāh through Whose Mercy and Grace this second edition is made possible. This work was a labour of love and is dedicated to our leader, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and to the memory of a great teacher of this century, Mawlana Muhammad Fazl-ur-rahman Ansari (ra).

I would like to acknowledge the help of the following persons who were all part of the first edition; Fatima Moolla; my wife Sharifa, daughter Ayesha, sons Sufyaan and ‘Abdul ‘Aleem; Saleem Khan, Nazeem Khan, Dr Siddqi Ismail and Awaatief Daniels.

Regarding the second edition I would like to acknowledge the following persons:

Professor Anwar Hosain and Mr Yusuf Dangor of the Medical University of Southern Africa who requested for a reprint of the book and arranged for the funding of the second edition.

May Allāh Almighty reward them and the sponsors for their generous support.

To the readers, constructive criticisms are most welcome and please pray that Allāh Almighty shower His forgiveness and Mercy upon the transcriber and editor for any errors in the text.

All praise and thanks belongs to Allāh (swt), Lord of all the worlds.

Mahdie Kriel (Reg Eng Tech)
Crawford, Cape Town
17 June 2002

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INTRODUCTION

Dr. *Mawlana* Muhammad Fazl-ur-Rahman Al-Ansari Al-Qadiri came to South Africa in 1970 and 1972 to conduct a series of discourses on different topics at mosques, universities and assemblies. In 1970 he lectured at the three South African historically white universities; namely, the universities of Cape Town, Stellenbosch and Natal. His lectures have made an indelible impression on South African Muslims who hold him in high esteem. *Mawlana* Ansari was a scholar who could combine the traditional Islamic sciences with modern knowledge, and articulate the Islamic worldview for the new generation of modern educated Muslims. His lectures were serialised in the *Muslim News*, and recently Mr. Mahdie Kriel has been broadcasting them over Radio 786. Mr. Kriel has undergone the exacting exercise of transcribing all of the lectures of *Mawlana* Ansari, and he even gave talks based on them in a number of mosques in Cape Town. My editing task was made much easier as I received a clear typed draft of the original lectures from him. This is the first attempt to put together this volume of edited lectures given in South Africa. It might be the only collection, so far, as we are not aware of similar attempts being made in other parts of the world.

At school we were exposed to atheistic teachers who challenged our faith. *Mawlana* Ansari's lectures personally inspired us and restored our faith in Islam as a vibrant spiritual and intellectual force to be reckoned with in the modern age. It was therefore an honour for me to work on the editing of *Mawlana* Ansari's lectures. Many other scholars have come to South Africa since 1972, but *Mawlana* Ansari will always have a special place in our hearts. He was the first Muslim philosopher to have inspired us in South Africa. He will be remembered by all of us for his scientific and philosophical exposition of Islam and for his candid convictions that came through his counselling for Muslims.

Each of these lectures can be viewed independently; and in the context of its specific audience. I have omitted some repetitions and redundancies within a single lecture for the sake of conciseness and brevity, and without losing the effect of the original words. Repetition of broad themes on knowledge, spirituality and ethics could not be avoided as they are integrated into every lecture. The theme of ethics,

for example, was very important to *Mawlana* Ansari; in fact, in his last major work, *Qur'anic Foundations and Structure of Muslim Society*, he stated that character development is the foundation of Islamic guidance.

For the sake of convenience, the lectures have been arranged according to three main sections: The first (lectures 1–9) deals with the basics of Islam such as “The Philosophy of the *Shahādah*”; the second (lectures 10–17), deals with mainly issues of an intellectual nature, and the third (lectures 18–22), with the spiritual dimensions of Islam, such as “The *Mi‘rāj*”. The book, however, has not been physically separated into these three sections as the themes are interconnected and the reader ought to have an integrated view of *Mawlana* Ansari’s thought as a whole.

His impromptu lectures had a particular message for a particular audience; often, the Imām of the mosque would ask him to talk on a specific topic a minute before his address. He had the gift of speaking spontaneously according to the level of orientation of the audience. We therefore request the reader to keep in mind that these were not speeches based on written preparation. For an evaluation of Ansari’s written essays, and for a more elaborate explanation of his ideas contained in this collection, we urge the reader to refer to his many writings. My task was only to edit his lectures for the sake of readability, and I have, in the process, been careful not to lose the force and flavour of the original spoken lectures.

The rules of speech are different from those of writing; and impromptu speeches, although full of conviction and a clear message, contain many repetitions and redundancies, which, if placed in written form, becomes incoherent and cumbersome for the reader. I have therefore had to omit some repetitions and superfluous words, which do not help in the understanding of the text, or in the flow of reading. For the first time, the lectures could now be read, and the reader has now the advantage of going back to some place in the text for further reflection or clarification. I have not tampered with the ideas of the text, nor have I added my own. I have pruned the text to enhance clarity, coherence and readability. Thus, I had to insert phrases to link a paragraph to its preceding one; and at times, I had to reconstruct the syntax to avoid ambiguity. Ansari’s translations of the Arabic verses have been left as they are. Although they are not always exact literal translations, they nevertheless convey the meanings of the verses and Ansari’s

understanding of them within the context of his lectures. To awaken more interest in Ansari's thought we hope to prepare professional recordings of the edited lectures. His oral presentations were intellectually stimulating and spiritually inspiring to those searching for what Ansari calls "dynamic orthodoxy".

The publication of this collection of edited lectures is timely for two main reasons: Firstly, since *Mawlana* Ansari's demise in 1974, changes have taken place within the local Muslim community in the field of education. The last two decades have witnessed the mushrooming of Arabic and Islamic studies in schools (private and public), universities, Darul Ulums and community colleges all over South Africa. It is now not uncommon for Muslims to be professionally trained in so many of the fields of the natural, technical and social sciences. It is this educated segment of the community that is searching for a dynamic understanding of Islam; an Islam that will enable them to respond constructively to the challenges of secular modernity. Ansari has paved the way for such a response by integrating modern scientific and philosophical thought in his exposition of Islam. As such, his appeal to the larger segment of educated Muslims today, will be greater than ever before. Secondly, being a *Ṣūfī* practitioner himself, the esoteric dimensions of Islam are brought to bear in all of his lectures. This deeper approach to Islam will appeal to all those who are disillusioned with empty rituals that are devoid of spiritual content. To be sure, there is a revival of Islamic spirituality in South Africa; many *Ṣūfī* shaykhs have visited the country and many *dhikr* groups following their methodology have emerged. Islamic booksellers have also indicated the greater interest the public has in reading *Ṣūfī* literature, both of a practical and an intellectual orientation.

I would like to thank those who have assisted with the proof reading of this edited collection; but I alone am responsible for its many shortcomings. I have to thank my wife for her emotional support in the completion of this collection, and my children for putting up with the vagaries of a father wrapped up in the editing of a book when he was about to leave them soon for study abroad.

Drs Yasien Mohamed
Chairperson, Department of Arabic Studies
University of the Western Cape, South Africa

CHAPTER 1

Knowledge and the Self

Generally, those Muslims with a narrow, conservative Islamic education, regard Western education, especially at a tertiary level, as a vice. They do not approach learning with an open mind and pursue knowledge for its own sake, even if it comes from a non-Muslim educational institution. As long as Muslims are clear about their Islamic values, there is no need to fear these levels of knowledge that come from a foreign source. Nowadays, it is important to pursue higher education for a career, but the pursuance of knowledge as such is also an Islamic duty.

The mission of Islam is conquest at three levels. They are:

- conquest of the self
- conquest of the environment
- conquest of nature

I am referring here to a comprehensive conquest, at both the spiritual and physical levels.

The levels of conquest constitute the mission of Islam in all its practices – whether we pray five times per day or fast during the month of *Ramaḍān*. The first thing is the conquest of the lower self or the carnal self (*nafs*) by every individual.

Tazkiyah (purification), is one of the primary objectives of Islamic teachings and one of the most important aspects of the Holy Prophet's

(§) mission. *Tazkiyah* originally meant ‘pruning the plant, to remove what is harmful for its growth’. Thus *tazkiyah* is to purify the self for the sake of character development. When the term is applied to the human personality, it means to beautify and remove from it all evil traces and spiritual diseases that are obstacles in experiencing Allāh (swt). When this purification is done, then the human personality – which consists of a lower and higher self – will function under the command of the higher self.

The lower self (*nafs*) functions on the basis of instinct; that is, the instinct of hunger, sex, procreation, desire for wealth and self-assertion. The higher self, however, yearns for the values of truth, beauty, holiness, harmony and finally communion with Allāh (swt). Unless this carnal self is brought under the control of the higher self, the person, in spite of being human, will behave like an animal and less as the vicegerent of God or *khalīfat-Allāh*.

This struggle over the lower self (*al-nafs al-ammārah*) is the greater struggle (*jihād al-akbar*). Thus, all religious devotions, spiritual exercises and teachings are directed towards this *jihād* or struggle to tame the carnal self and to function under the command of the higher self. This will enable all actions to have an ethical and not an instinctive basis. The instinctive self desires wealth, power and pleasure. Sometimes the instinctive self appears in the form of a raging storm; then the human being acts like a brute. Observe any human being whose anger is out of control, such a person behaves like an animal.

These instinctive urges can direct man to the abyss. These two aspects of life are clearly mentioned in the Holy Qur’ān:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ

Verily I have created man in the best form – given him the best constitution. But I have endowed him (that, if he so desires,) he can sink to the lowest of the low.

(Q 95:4–5)

Therefore this struggle is there in man. The human personality has

two facets: light and darkness, good and evil. We are told in the Holy Qur'an:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا
قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

He who purifies it and keeps it pure, he who cultivates [develops] it, and constantly prunes it, he has achieved success.

(Q 91:7-9)

Such a person has achieved his destiny and:

وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا

He who permits his personality to become stunted or falls prey to evil, is a hopeless failure.

(Q 91:10)

They are those who move further from their destiny.

What is the purpose of human life but to realise the potential of *khalīfat-Allāh*; to follow the straight path and not to deviate from it. This is possible through *tawfīq* (divine assistance) from Allāh and through His Strength and Mercy. When man actualizes his function as *khalīfat-Allāh*, he becomes the master over himself and the environment. In order to achieve this he must conquer his lower self (*nafs*), which is the first level of the conquest of the self; the starting point for mastery over all else.

The second level is the conquest of the environment. Because the human being lives in a social order, the maintenance of the purity of the individual's life is possible only if his environment is also pure. Thus every human being has to struggle individually and collectively to eradicate all types of moral and spiritual evils. In the Holy Qur'an we are told:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

You are the best community that has been raised for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid (eradicate) evil and you believe in Allāh.

(Q 3:110)

The third level is the conquest of nature. This potential *khalīfat-Allāh* can only be realised through the conquest of nature as exemplified in the *Mi'rāj* of our beloved Prophet (ﷺ). Nothing, not even the cosmos, could stand in his way in attaining nearness to his Creator. This demonstrates the highest order of *khalīfat-Allāh*.

What is *khalīfat-Allāh*? We read in the Holy Qur'ān:

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِّنْهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

Allāh (swt) has (endowed the human beings with such powers and) made the constitution of everything in the heavens and the earth in such a fashion, so as to be controlled and conquered by man. God has made this as the mission of mankind.

(Q 45:13)

Every human being is *khalīfat-Allāh* potentially. According to the *ḥadīth*:

الْخَلْقُ عِيَالُ اللَّهِ

All mankind is Allāh's family.

Almighty Allāh loves all and also punishes all transgressors – whether Muslim or non-Muslim. He is not a tribal god, He is the Righteous God and says in the Holy Qur'ān:

إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

Say: My Lord is on the straight path.

(Q 11:56)

Allāh (swt) is the Righteous God who imposes principles upon Himself – although He is our Creator. Therefore, He invites us to do the same and pray to Him:

أِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

Guide us on the straight path.

(Q 1:6)

We should also walk on the straight path. The shortest line between two points is the straight line. Therefore the goal can be seen from the starting point. The *āyat* continues:

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

In these are the guidelines for those who use their intellectual powers.

(Q 45:13)

Guidelines for those who employ their reasoning powers, for probing deeper into the mysteries of the laws of nature.

People talk about landing on the moon, the Qur'ān has mentioned about people travelling further:

وَالْقَمَرَ إِذَا شِئْتَ لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَن طَبَقٍ

And the moon, when you discover water on there, then you will travel from one region to another.

(Q 84:18–19)

The concept of duality: dividing life into two watertight compartments is un-Islamic. The concept of knowledge in other religions is dualistic: there is a form of knowledge which is sacred and a form of knowledge which is profane.

The Holy Qur'ān, speaks of a system of values. Every culture is based on a particular arrangement of values. The human personality has five levels of consciousness and therefore five values which correspond to these levels:

- spiritual (consciousness of a Transcendental Being)
- aesthetical
- intellectual
- moral and
- physical

A community is sometimes aware only of *some* of these five values, thus its value system is imperfect, and the culture that emerges from it is also flawed. An ideology might know the five values, but the order may be incorrect. The problem of other cultures is the problem of gradation of values; some values are given greater priority than others. The modern culture of permissiveness is problematic as it gives priority to the physical level of consciousness rather than consciousness of other higher levels. The Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* are absolutely clear on values. In the following verse from the Holy Qur'ān the source of exaltation by Allāh is mentioned:

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ

Those are honoured by Allāh who cultivate imān and who cultivate 'ilm (knowledge).

(Q 58:11)

'*Ilm* here means the various branches of knowledge. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) came with two roles in human history:

- to close the era of divine spoonfeeding, that is the era of prophetic revelation, and
- opened the modern scientific era. Evidence of this can be found when we read the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* and the history of science.

In his book *The Making of Humanity*, R. Briffault says: “Science before Islam was unscientific. The world did not know science before the advent of Islam.”

Pre-Islamic science was based on the deductive method which is a defective method of inquiry. The Holy Prophet’s (ﷺ) method was the scientific one which encouraged the experimental or the inductive method of inquiry.

The foundation of physical science is based on three principles:

- unity of mankind
- unity of knowledge
- unity of nature

The first one to give these principles of unity (*tawhīd*) was the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). Why is it that three-quarters of the verses of the Holy Qur’ān refer to natural phenomena? And after these verses we are told:

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

In these are the guidelines for those who use their reasoning powers.
(Q 13:4)

Regarding knowledge the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said:

فَضْلُ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِي عَلَى أَدْنَاكُمْ

The superiority of a person who cultivates knowledge over the one who does devotional exercises is like my superiority over the meanest of you!

حَبْرُ الْعَالِمِ أَعْظَمُ مِنْ دَمِ الشَّاهِدِ

The ink of the scholar is holier than the blood of the martyr.

الْحِكْمَةُ ضَالَّةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ

Every portion of knowledge is the lost property of the believer.

أُطْلُبِ الْعِلْمَ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِالصِّينِ

Seek knowledge even unto China.

But in this age of degeneration, we are being taught that knowledge is only of three types, namely *fiqh*, *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth*.

Whoever studies beyond these becomes a devil. This is proclaimed by so-called pious Muslims. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) laid the foundations and principles of physical science.

Let us read the Holy Qur'ān:

وَالْخَيْلَ وَالْبِغَالَ وَالْحَمِيرَ لِتَرْكَبُوهَا وَزِينَةً وَيَخْلُقُ
مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

These horses, mules and donkeys have been created for you, as a means of conveyance and adornment for your stables, but in the future God will cause the creation of vehicles which you cannot perceive now.

(Q 16:8)

Up to the twelfth century all the scientists believed that the universe was a static universe, but the Qur'ān tells us:

يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَاءُ

Almighty Allāh continuously adds mercy to this universe as He pleases.

(Q 35:1)

This is an expanding universe, not a “block” universe as Newton and the others believed. As a famous teacher said: “These fundamental portions of wisdom which took the philosophers and scientists centuries to find, were given by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) just by the way.”

Today the world of science is divided on the issue whether there are living beings on other planets, but the Qur'ān says:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا
مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَهُوَ عَلَى جَمْعِهِمْ إِذَا يَشَاءُ قَدِيرٌ

*Amongst the signs of Allāh is the creation of the heavenly bodies and the earth and **those living beings** whom He has placed in them, and Allāh is going to cause them to meet one another when He wills.*

(Q 42:29)

In Islam there is no division of sacred and profane knowledge, and consequently, the pursuit of physical science is an act of *'ibādah*. It is true that the highest level of knowledge is the knowledge of *dīn* (religion), but the process of knowledge is such that one cannot understand the highest level of knowledge unless one builds up the lower.

If we read the history of Muslim education, we will find that the courses of education were as comprehensive as it could be. Knowledge was arranged in terms of unity (*tawhīd*). We think an *'ālim* is one who studies *fiqh*, *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth*. How wrong we are! Do you know that Imām Abū Ḥanīfa wrote a scientific treatise with mathematical equations and this is available at the International Library in France. Imām Ghazzālī, Imām Fakhruddīn al-Rāzī, Imām Shāfi'ī and many others were intellectual giants in various branches of knowledge and yet they were pious and saintly people.

Therefore, the early Muslims fulfilled the tasks of laying the foundation of modern science by classifying the different branches of knowledge and removing the false from the truth. They gave science the shape of pure science and laid the foundation of several exact sciences.

Then two unfortunate events happened in the Islamic world:

- The expulsion of the Muslims from Spain and
- The fall of Baghdad.

These were the seats of scientific learning and our enemies saw to it that all traces of Islamic achievements were destroyed. Thereafter the Muslim culture declined. It was progressing in the direction of *khalīfat-Allāh*, which is conquest of the self, the environment and nature. Muslims withdrew themselves from the conquest of nature and, in the process, lost the world.

False teachings emerged and the Muslims returned from the laboratory to the *muṣallā*. Read one thousand *tasbīḥs* on such and such a night and get a few million *thawāb*! Finally, we became so weak in the field of technology that the enemy could produce better arms and attack the world of Islam which collapsed like a house of cards. When it collapsed, Muslims became their slaves. This is because we regarded scientific education as un-Islamic!

If we continue to lose the opportunity and do not understand the emphasis of *‘ilm* – we will be destroyed. Why should we make Islam a joke and find ourselves weak and contemptible? In every community we find “Muslims” committing murder, rape, fraud and drug peddling. Are they doing good to the name of Islam? I think they are the worst criminals against the name of Islam. Almost all over the world, Muslims are the most backward in education! Are they the followers of him who said: “Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim male and female.”

But they do not want to learn the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth* and want to remain in the gutter. Some Muslims now say: “We want to bring about an Islamic State again.” How? With what? If we examine their motives we find that their approach is either social, historical, ritualistic or political. With what material do we want to bring about change?

Our Prophet (ﷺ) established the Islamic State with human resources like *Sayyidinā* Abū Bakr, *Sayyidinā* ‘Umar Farūq, *Sayyidinā* ‘Uthmān, *Sayyidinā* ‘Ali (ra) and others. How can you build an Islamic State without creating that same band or group? And who wants to bring about change and with what? Slogans, fighting against one another, one organisation against the other! We are warned in the Holy Qur’ān: *O you who believe! Enter into Islam completely.* (Q 2:208); that is, the

whole of Islam comprehensively. Allāh says:

أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ

Do you believe only a part of the message and discard the rest?

(Q 2:85)

If you mutilate the religion the punishment will be - *gizyun fil ḥayātīd dunyā* - “*you will be debased in this world.*” You will enjoy no honour! Are we not in this state? Should we not rise above petty things and overcome our defects. We will get a beating all the time despite our carrying the label of Islam.

O Muslims, take care before Islam becomes a memory of the past. Unless and until we can organise education according to the Islamic concept, and produce God-fearing, morally integrated, spiritually elevated, intellectually enlightened Muslims in this community, we will have no future.

All praises are due to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds.

CHAPTER 2

What is Islam?

My life is passed mostly in agony and anguish because I am one of the soldiers of Islam on the battlefield who always have to face problems. I have to face those mighty anti-Islamic forces arrayed against Islam all over the world. In addition, I have to face Muslim ignorance, apathy and internal bickering over trivial issues while the enemy is blasting our fortress.

The enemy is taking away our best asset and the very flower of our nation is being kidnapped – the Muslim youth! Muslim youth is leaving the fold of Islam in utter frustration in all the countries of the world. The apparently pious preachers of Islam are inviting Muslims to waste their energies on fighting amongst themselves.

Most Muslims are considered to be practising Muslims but tend to regard Islam as a cult, and not as a comprehensive way of life. According to us it is constituted of certain rituals and ceremonials, and hair-splittings about *aqā'id* is where it ends. We do not consider the moral value of life because we have divorced religion from morality. Observe how far our devotional piety is divorced from our morality.

I am confident that whatever Islam teaches is not a matter of interpretation but is given clearly in the Holy Qur'ān and the authentic sayings of the Holy Prophet (s). Islam is the only religion which is historical. It is not like Christianity, Hinduism, or Buddhism, where the so-called facts of these religions are enshrouded in mystery and one

feels mystified if one tries to find out exactly what their teachings are.

Islam was born in the broad daylight of history and it goes to the credit of our forefathers, the *ṣaḥābah*, the *tābi'īn* and the early Muslims. They took the greatest care in preserving the historical character of Islam so that today no one can claim ignorance.

When we compare what we have been taught in the Holy Qur'ān and the authentic *ḥadīths* of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) with our view of its teachings in this age, we will notice a great difference. Remember, that the ideological cultures of life, whether they have been based on philosophy or sociology or religion, may be divided into three types which are ideational, sensational and idealistic.

When you study the philosophies and religions which were there before Islam, you will find that whether it was Hinduism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism or Buddhism, all these religions had the “otherworldly view”, i.e. they stood for ideational culture. The concept of this culture was that only the life to come was valuable, but not life here on this earth. Their philosophy was that this world is evil, the human body with all its demands are evil and that the social life is evil. Consequently, according to them, the salvation of mankind consisted of renouncing everything which was material and physical, sacrificing it at the altar of what they considered to be spiritual development. Therefore the saint in Christianity was a celibate: a person who considered it a sin to give comfort to his body. In Hinduism and Buddhism we find a similar situation. This was the ideational culture and its foundation was mysticism. Everything that was mystifying and mysterious found its place there.

By contrast we have the modern western civilisation with its sensate culture. The foundations of the modern western civilisation are:

- from the point of view of metaphysics – its worldview is materialistic.
- from the point of view of morals it is hedonistic (the pursuit of sensuous pleasure only) and utilitarian (an action is good only if it is materially advantageous in this world).
- from the psychological viewpoint it is based on sensationalism. Study western art, drama, poetry, fiction and their life as such and

- you will find that the basis of their outlook is sensational.
- from the point of view of politics this civilisation is based on the concept of expediency. Opportunity is not based on principle.

What is the message of Islam and what is the message that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) brought? My conclusion is that every teaching that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) brought was absolutely unique, up to this day! Despite the fact that the Qur'ān says:

إِنَّ هَذَا فِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى

And this is in the books of the earliest revelations, the books of Ibrāhīm and Mūsā.

(Q 87:18–19)

However, the *ṣuḥuf* of Ibrāhīm and Mūsā are not in the world anymore. There is the principle of continuity of divine guidance on which the Qur'ān stands, but when one examines its teachings and ideals of mankind one discovers the uniqueness of the message. For example, the Holy Qur'ān defines religion as follows:

وَلَهُ ۥ أَسْلَمَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

All that is in the heavens and the earth are muslim.

(Q 3:83)

All creation submits to Allāh involuntarily but human beings submit to Allāh by free choice.

The Qur'ān says:

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ فَمِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَمِنْكُمْ مُّؤْمِنٌ

It is He who has created you; and of you some are unbelievers and some are believers.

(Q 64:2)

This obligation has been placed upon the human being because Allāh

has made him the highest in creation and has made him His *khalīfah*. The human being has to perform certain functions in terms of being His *khalīfah fil-ard* – as the “vicegerent of God on the earth.”

What is religion? The definition according to the Holy Qur’ān is absolutely different from any that has been given by any other religion, pre-Islamic or post-Islamic. The Holy Qur’ān says:

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ
عَلَيْهَا لَا بَدِيلَ لِمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ الَّذِي يُقِيمُ وَلَكِنْ
أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

So set your face upright for the Dīn, the way of life, with single-minded devotion and loyalty, according to the nature in which Allāh has created man. Allāh’s universal laws never change. This is the standard religion. But most human beings do not understand this.

(Q 30:30)

Religious life is to lead one’s life according to those natural laws and according to the verse Allāh created man according to his own nature, which is *tawḥīd*.

This concept was not given by Christianity or any other philosophy, but the Qur’ān. The Qur’ān also negates ritualism or ritual piety in so many verses. Ritual piety was the cornerstone of all other faiths: burn so many candles, have an altar like this or music like that. The Holy Qur’ān made it clear that there are two types of piety, namely: formal piety and practical (or real) piety.

The Qur’ān says:

لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُولُوا وَجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ

There is no (it is not) piety in the adoption of a direction to the east or the west.

(Q 2:177)

فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ

Wherever you turn, Allāh is there.

(Q 2:115)

Allāh is not confined to the direction of the *qiblah*. The *maṣlahah* and the *ḥikmah* which are there for which the *qiblah* has been fixed is something else, but don't think it is piety as such. To adopt a direction ritualistically is not piety.

The verse continues:

وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ
وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّنَ وَءَاتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَأَبْنَى السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ
وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَى الزَّكَاةَ

But piety is to believe in Allāh, and the last day and the angels and all the prophets. It also means giving away of wealth out of the love of Allāh to close family relations and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and for the emancipation of slaves and establish prayer and give charity.

(Q 2:177)

The angels who are functionaries of Allāh, maintain the divine order in the entire universe. This negates the theory of Sir Isaac Newton, who believes that God created this world and left it to itself and does not interfere. The Qur'ān negates this for we are to believe in the functionaries or *malā'ikah* of Allāh (swt). Divine interference in everything in the world is hereby affirmed. The divine guidance came in the form of scriptures which have been prescribed and which ultimately, are to be found in the form of one *kitāb*. Here the verse does not refer to *kutub* (pl. of *kitāb*), because all those divine books, which came before, have been changed through interpolation. They

lost their original purity except for one divine book called the Qur'ān. The verse continues, “*and all the prophets*” – affirming here the continuity of divine guidance. This is simple as far as *aqā'id* goes.

Here the Qur'ān does not mention all those over-indulgences which later Muslims developed in order to fight one another and to come to blows and to call one another *kāfir*. This verse is simple, direct and full of life. Do you know that academic theological discussions are not full of life, they are only full of quibbling. This is a direct statement given that suffices for a Muslim. If a person believes in that, you have no right to say he is not a Muslim. These are matters of belief without any discomfort to yourself.

Then the verse comes to the real pitch and here comes the belief of discomfort and sacrifice in real practical demonstration that you are a Muslim and a *mu'min*, that you believe in Allāh and that orientation of life which has been given and expounded by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). There is a saying in Persian – “If you ask from me my life itself, I will give it to you, but if you ask me about money well, it is a questionable matter.” We should note that Almighty Allāh (swt) is emphasising first of all the practical virtues here in this verse. He does not first mention the devotional virtues like *ṣalāh* but is rather mentioning social virtues first. He is mentioning the *ḥuqūq al-'ibād*. Here He is giving primary importance to the *ḥuqūq al-'ibād*, of which Muslims have lost sight of today, completely. So, Allāh (swt) says that when you have performed the *ḥuqūq al-'ibād* rightly, only then can you confidently come to My presence and offer the *ṣalāh*. Ghālib (the poet) said:

Will you go to the Ka'bah with this face? With all the crimes
impinged on your face? Or should you not purify yourself first
and then go to the Ka'bah which is a holy place.

This is the philosophy of faith in the Holy Qur'ān. Firstly, testing of your *īmān* through sacrifice for others. All those who might need your help, help them first, then come to Allāh Almighty and be a *muṣallī*. And after helping all the above you will still have to pay the *zakāh*. Somebody mentioned: “We pay so much taxes to the government,

how can *zakāh* still be due from us?" For that person's information, irrespective of the government taxes, and even after giving charity, a person has to pay *zakāh*. A Muslim is not born to be the top dog of this world only, but an angel of the heavenly bliss. If a Muslim believes that he is only in the category of animals, then he may keep the dog's bone in his mouth and take pleasure in being a millionaire or a multi-millionaire. Such a person has no place with God. Nowhere in the Qur'ān does Allāh Almighty say "Be wealthy" or that, "Allāh loves for you to be wealthy." But the Qur'ān has condemned wealthiness and extravagance in so many places in the most terrible fashion. Let us take an example from our beloved Prophet (ﷺ).

Once, a person came to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and pleaded with him to pray for his progeny for the blessing of this world. The words that the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed are the key to the entire problem. He prayed:

اللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْ آلَ مُحَمَّدٍ قُوتًا

O Allāh give to my progeny that which will suffice for their basic needs.

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) prayed for his progeny, who were dear to him, for nothing more than their basic needs. The Holy Qur'ān says:

إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

This fact cannot be denied that your wealth and progeny are a means of test and trial for you. But in the presence of Allāh is the highest reward.

(Q 64:15)

Your reward will not come to you from your wealth, large shares in your company nor from your progeny. You may take pride in your children but: *Wealth and the army of sons are adornments only of this worldly life.* (Q 18:46)

I am trying to bring to your attention the unique characteristics of Islam – may be at another occasion I will tell you how the Muslims

have distorted most of them. I refer to the last part of the āyat in question (Q 2:177). “And establish the ṣalāh and pay the zakāh.” According to the Qur’ān, the money which a Muslim has is not his. Allāh (swt) proclaimed:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ

Allāh has purchased the life and wealth of every believer.

(Q 9:111)

He is no more the owner. Man is only the trustee of all his possessions. As proclaimed by Allāh, this money is not meant to be a curse for you, spend it! Then alone can it be a blessing for you. Hoard it and it will lead you to hell! The verse from the Holy Qur’ān clearly states:

وَبِئْسَ لِكُلِّ هُمْزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَا لَا وَعَدَدَهُ
يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ مَالَهُ أَخْلَدَهُ كَلَّا لَيُنْبَذَنَّ فِي الْحُطَمَةِ
وَمَا أَذْرَنَّا مَا الْحُطَمَةُ نَارُ اللَّهِ الَّتِي تَطْلُعُ
عَلَى الْأَفْعَدَةِ

Woe unto him, (the man of wrong character), who amasses wealth and counts it. He feels that his wealth will immortalise him. Never! He will be thrown in the al-ḥuṭamah. And what will explain to you what the ḥuṭamah is? It is the fire that is kindled and rises above the hearts in extended columns.

(Q 104:1–7)

What does it mean “Rises above the hearts?” You must have had a notion about *jahannam*, that it will be a big place with fires or furnaces but, here Allāh (swt) says that the hell is above the heart. This is the hell of losing the opportunity of doing good and earning salvation. This is the hell of losing the opportunity of working for the welfare of the less fortunate – until the less fortunate become frustrated in the Soviet Union and China and other countries of the world and rise in

bloody revolt and take away everything from the wealthy.

So the Holy Qur'ān laid it down that it is permissible for a Muslim to earn by legitimate means only and not by any means fair or foul. There is no such thing as "all is fair in love and war." Wealth can be earned only through legitimate means and the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has proclaimed:

الْحَلَالُ بَيْنَ وَالْحَرَامُ بَيْنَ

Whatever is legitimate (*ḥalāl*) has been made clear whatever has been made illegitimate (*ḥarām*) has been made clear.

It has not been left to our interpretation. There are some people who try to raise the banner of their own piety and things that were not made *ḥarām* by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), they proclaim to be *ḥarām*. They have no right to do that and are committing a very great sin.

So, a Muslim is permitted to earn by legitimate means only as defined and fixed by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and not by our wishful thinking. In this manner a person may earn millions – but, then he cannot spend it as he wishes. The Holy Qur'ān is clear on this:

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلِ الْعَفْوَ

O Prophet, these Muslims ask thee what they should spend in the way of God for the service of mankind? Say: all that is saved after spending on your basic needs.

(Q 2:219)

Spending here means not as Fir'awn and Qārūn, but as Muslims. This is as far as *ḥuqūq al-'ibād* is concerned.

Then the Holy Qur'ān comes to *ḥuqūq al-nafs*, the personal quality. The verse continues:

وَالْمُؤْفُوتُ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا

If you make a promise, fulfill it at all cost.

(Q 2:177)

Here the Qur'ān is again talking of social ethics. This is practical piety. Allow me to give you an example of this and compare our most "pious" Muslims in this regard? There are numerous examples, but I'll quote only one from the life of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).

The companion Sayyidinā Hudaifah (ra) was amongst the last to leave Makkah for Madīnah. He was stopped by the guards of the Quraysh and prevented from leaving Makkah. However, he was told that he could leave Makkah only if he promised not to join the Muslim army in the forthcoming war, the battle of Badr. Sayyidinā Hudaifah (ra) promised to do so. Upon his arrival at Madīnah he related the whole incident to our beloved Prophet (ﷺ). After some time had passed, the battle of Badr was imminent and our beloved Prophet (ﷺ) could raise only three hundred and thirteen poorly equipped soldiers. The Makkans came with a great force and when Sayyidinā Hudaifah (ra) came to join the army, the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade him from joining the army and reminded him of his promise. Sayyidinā Hudaifah protested and said: "But sir, a promise under duress is not a promise" and our Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "For other human beings, yes, but not to a Muslim. A Muslim never breaks a promise no matter what the circumstances. No Muslim should break the law of Allāh." And Sayyidinā Hudaifah could not go to the battlefield.

But our promises of today! There is a whole dictionary of excuses which has been coined and kept ready. Some people, even elderly people sitting in the market place, dealing in transactions and breaking their promises. What is this, a new type of Islam according to personal feelings and wishes? The verse continues:

وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ

Those who stick to perseverance and patience when in hardship and losses.

(Q 2:177)

A Muslim can only face all these difficulties calmly and serenely because his motto of life is:

وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ
مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

And give glad tidings to the ṣābirīn – to those who cultivate and practice ṣabr – who, when a calamity befalls them, they say: Everything belongs to Allāh and to Him we must return.

(Q 2:155–156)

Why should we care? We are not going to live here for ever. We are going to return to Him. Let us take an example from a period in history when the Muslims had sunk to a very low level in certain aspects of their lives. Politically they were beaten by their enemies and morally the highest among them were like the highest of today: given to wine, women and luxuries. At that time was born one of the greatest reformers in Islamic history from amongst the followers of the Holy Prophet (ṣ). He was *Sayyidinā Ghawth al-a‘ẓam* Muḥiyyiddin Sayyid ‘Abdul Qādir Jilānī (ra) (470–561AH/1077–1166AD). What was the example set by him regarding the Qur’anic injunction of *those who stick to perseverance and patience in hardship and losses*.

It is related that he was a business magnate of the highest order, although not leading the life of a business magnate. He lead a life of *faqr* and earning wealth for the sake of Islam. His business was so successful that he had a merchant navy of his own.

One day while he was sitting in his *khanqah* with his disciples, his general manager informed him that the flotilla which was carrying merchandise and going from Basra had perished at sea. If this flotilla perished, then the whole business perished too. *Sayyidinā Ghawth al-a‘ẓam* looked at the general manager, bowed his head for a few moments, raised it and said: “*Al-ḥamdu-lillāh*” (all thanks and praise belongs to Allāh). He then continued his discourse with his disciples. After about an hour or so, the general manager returned and said that the previous information was incorrect, that the flotilla was caught in

a very big storm but managed to reach the shore safely. Again *Ghawth al-a'zam* looked at the general manager, bowed his head for a few moments, lifted his head again and said: “*Al-ḥamdu-lillāh*”.

One of his close students said to him: “Sir, I am unable to understand this, that when the bad news came that the flotilla perished you said, “*Al-ḥamdu-lillāh*”. And when the good news came you also said, “*Al-ḥamdu-lillāh*”. What is this strange phenomenon?

Shaykh ‘Abdul Qādir Jilānī (ra) smiled and said: “You are mistaken in thinking that I said: “*Al-ḥamdu-lillāh*” on the drowning or saving of the flotilla. I introspected or examined my innerself to see if the shocking news or the good news had the slightest effect on my emotion, and I found that there was none. And it was then that I said: “*Al-ḥamdu-lillāh*”.

“*Innā lillāhi*”, is not said while weeping and wailing and moaning. This is not that “*innā lillāhi*”. This should be said with the spirit, understanding and consciousness that the inner and outer condition should be in conformity with that principle of “*innā lillāhi*”. It was not only for the *Ghawth al-a'zam* to do it. We have been commanded all to be like this for the motto of life the Qur’ān has laid down for believers is:

لَيْسَ لَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ
تَذَكَّرْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ

Any calamity that may come to you, whatever you lose in life, never allow frustration or despair to overtake you. And any blessing of Allāh that might come to you which make you happy, do not become elated at that. Allāh does not like those who are weather cocks!

(Q 57:23)

Otherwise you are not behaving as a Muslim. When a calamity befalls you, become like drones and when happiness comes, you lose the balance of your mind. Such people Allāh (swt) says cannot be My ‘*ibād*, they cannot be My servants. In another verse we are told,;

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلَى حَرْفٍ فَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ خَيْرٌ اطْمَأَنَّ بِهِ
وَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ فِتْنَةٌ أُنْقَلَبَ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ
ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ

There are those who believe, or render their devotion, loyalty or faith on flimsy foundation. When good comes to such a person, he becomes elated, and when a test comes from Allāh, he performs a somersault!
(Q 22:11)

He laments with indignation to Allāh! I have been hurt! I have been praying here at the *masjid* five times a day! Allāh (swt) says about such worshippers or such Muslims that they *are losers in this life as well as the hereafter* (Q 22:2).

And this is a definite and evident loss in both the worlds. So what are the characteristics of a Muslim here?

Then the Qur'ān, continues with the verse:

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا

They alone are truthful.

(Q 2:177)

In their proclamation that they are truthful to Allāh (swt) and His Prophet and Islam. It is not the person who performs the *ṣalāh* five times ritualistically as a gymnastic exercise without spirit and understanding. Nor is it he who remains hungry and thirsty from morning to evening in the month of *Ramaḍān* and violating every law that was given by the Holy Prophet (ṣ) in connection with fasting. He eats so much at *ṣuḥūr* that he belches the whole day and he eats so much at *iftār* that he belches the whole night.

وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ

WHAT IS ISLAM?

Those who possess the sterling qualities of character, they
are the true Muslims. “They are the possessors of taqwa.”
(Q 2:177)

My dear brothers and sisters in Islam. I have expounded on the message
of Islam and its ideals but it is for us to take up this message and put
into practice, *inshā’-Allāh*.

All praises are due to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds.

CHAPTER 3

The Principle of Unity (*Tawhīd*)

The concept of Unity is the foundation of the Muslim community and the very essence of Islam. As we all know, the most important principle that has been given to us in Islam is the principle of *tawhīd* – unity! This does not mean that we should only believe in Allāh as the one true God. It means many more things.

Tawhīd is the basis of the philosophy of life in Islam. It means that Allāh (swt) is One (*Aḥad*), therefore all mankind is one family. Two groups are possible in this one family but both are concentric, that is, rallying around the same centre of humanity itself. About these two groups, the Qur’ān says:

فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ

Whoever wants to be a believer, let him be one, and whoever wants to be a disbeliever, let him be.

(Q 18:29)

Those who accept the divine truth from Allāh Almighty, this group has been formed for a definite mission as laid down in the Qur’ān:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

You are the best ideological group raised by God for the service of mankind in order that you may be a witness to the divine truth for all mankind. That you may invite and guide mankind to the path of truth, and believe in Allāh. Command only that which is good and eradicate with all the forces at your command, all that is evil and believe in Allāh.

(Q 3:110)

Your function is to invite to everything that is good and to eradicate all evil. You have to do this strictly under the principle of unity: under One True God.

From this, you obtain your inspiration, your strength, your sanction for being the teachers of goodness and piety for the entire mankind.

We have been called an *ummah*, a community, who shares the same ideal. As soon as the ideal changes the *ummah* does not remain one any longer. It can then be considered as different communities or ideological groups.

As the Holy Qur'ān says:

وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً

This ummah that Allāh established through His Beloved Prophet is one ummah.

(Q23:52)

It is indivisible and cannot be divided on the basis of race, languages or on the basis of various groups of the north, south, east or west. This *ummataṭan wāḥidatan* (one community) was one concept on which this community started on its journey in history.

A command has been given by the Lord and King of this universe, who cannot be disobeyed under any pretext. And Allāh commands:

وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا

Stand fast by that principle of unity and solidarity that has been given to you and do not divide yourself into different groups!

(Q3:103)

This division has been taking place in history and also among Muslims on two grounds:

- political – where there has been a clash between vested interests and personalities.
- theological bickering, quarrelling over petty things.

Regarding the clash of the egos and personalities of which we have been warned in the Holy Qur'ān:

وَلَا تَنَزَعُوا فَنَفْسَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ

Do not quarrel on the basis of your personalities; this division will weaken you and your prestige will vanish.

(Q 8:46)

You will enjoy no honour in the eyes of other communities. They will insult you because you no longer remain a challenge. The challenge can be met only by a group which is linked in a spirit of absolute unity. This hand has five fingers and each finger is weak in itself, but if I combine it into a fist, then it has hitting power and strength.

The clash of vested interests is something terrible. It is human nature to project one's ego: "I am better than so and so" but Allāh (swt) says about this human nature:

أَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُمْ زِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ

Know you all, that the life of this world is but play and amusement,
pomp and mutual boasting ...

(Q 57:20)

The *nafs al-ammārah* is embedded in the human personality and takes different forms. Here we have been told that if Muslims want to be sincere and loyal to the One and True God and to the Holy Prophet (s) who is the leader of this *ummah* for all times, then they cannot bring about anything which pertains to their personal interest. The Holy Qur'an is very clear on this point:

قُلْ إِن كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِنُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ آلِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرٍ ۚ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

Proclaim! if your parents and offspring, your brothers, your wife and kindred; the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline: or the dwellings in which you delight are dearer to you than Allāh and His Beloved Prophet (s) and the striving in His Cause. Then wait until punishment descends upon you from Allāh, and Allāh does not guide the rebellious.

(Q 9:24)

If this is the case, we are committing *shirk*!

The other problem is the creation of meaningless, purposeless, groundless and aimless theological questioning and bickering. The Qur'an tells us **that after the guidance has come to you,**

وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا
دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِعَابًا كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ

It does not behove you to become mushriks and divide yourselves into different sects rejoicing in that which is with it.

(Q 30:31–32)

If you create problems among yourselves in connection with your *īmān* and your Islam then you will be counted as *mushrikīn* and not *muwāḥḥidīn* or Muslims because you are divided. Each group and sect will say; “I alone am right and all the others are wrong.” This is a form of shirk against which we have been warned. We have also been warned of chastisement that is to come.

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ
وَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ

Never become like the previous Ummahs of previous prophets, when Allāh Almighty sent them clear guidance, they still differed with one another, for such people is a great chastisement. On the day when some faces will be brightened and others will be blackened.

(Q 3:105–106)

But what have we done? History shows that Islam came to a people no more divided than the Arabs. They were divided by a tribalism which ensured hostility and fighting the extent to which has probably not been recorded about any other community in history.

They could fight and shed blood because of simple differences that could last for over a century. The Arabs were a condemned people because they had no idea of the One True God and no notion of the concept of unity. The greatest achievement of Islam was to weld these warring tribes into one brotherhood! And proclaim:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ

The believers are but a single brotherhood.

(Q 49:10)

Any person who becomes a believer, *ipso facto* becomes a member of the brotherhood and has to deal with a fellow Muslim as a brother. The Holy Prophet (s) has said:

مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَوَادِهِمْ وَتَرَاحُمِهِمْ وَتَعَاطُفِهِمْ
كَمَثَلِ الْجَسَدِ إِذَا اشْتَكَى مِنْهُ عُضْوٌ
تَدَاعَى لَهُ سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ بِالسَّهَرِ وَالْحُمَى

The feeling of a Muslim for his brother is like one part of the body that has a feeling for the other part; if one part hurts the whole body pains.

The Qur'an says that this community that has been raised with this mission is not based on race, language, territory or colour. It is a community based on an ideal towards which they strive to achieve under one banner. When it was proclaimed:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ
صَفًّا كَانَهُمْ بُنِينَ مَرَصُوصٌ

Allāh loves that Muslims should combine into a wall of steel and then strive for the cause of Islam.

(Q 61:4)

If individuals want to fight in the way of Allāh (swt) as individuals, it has little merit in the eyes of God. The Companions of the Holy Prophet (s) heard the message, thought about it, assimilated it and absorbed it into their personalities and forgot about their egos. They heeded the warning in the Holy Qur'an regarding Iblis, who fell from

that high status, saying:

أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ خَلَقَنِي مِنْ نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ

I am better than Adam because O' God, thou created me of the fire and Adam of the clay. Fire can eat and destroy the clay, therefore I am superior.

(Q 7:12)

So he was told :

وَأِنَّ عَلَيْكَ اللَّعْنَةَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

And the curse shall be on thee till the day of judgement.

(Q15:35)

How can a person who believes in Allāh – He who does not share His Majesty and Greatness and Sovereignty with anyone else, who is Unique and Absolute – yet believe himself to be great? If a person says with his lips his *shahādah*, and he worships at the same time his *hawā an-nafs*, he is a *mushrik* according to the Qur'ān:

أَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ

Have you not seen him who worships his ego? He is a mushrik and he is blind!

(Q 25:43)

He asserts his ego in terms of his wealth and power, yet he is affirming that there is the One True Allāh (swt). A Muslim cannot be that! *Grandeur and Greatness* is only for Allāh (swt) – for no one else, for we are dependent on Him.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

O you who believe, you are all beggars at the door of God, (you are mere shadows on the firmament of space and time, who is staying here at the Will of God and His pleasure) only. Allāh is not dependent on any one and worthy of all praise.

(Q 35:15)

If we do not behave properly, we are told:

إِنْ يَشَاءُ ذُهِبْكُمْ وَيَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ
وَمَا ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ

If Allāh wants, he can wipe you off the face of the earth for he can create a new creation. Nor is that (at all) difficult for Allāh.

(Q 35:16–17)

What are you, O human beings! Here, Islam has gone to the utmost limit of self-effacement, teaching how to crush the ego. It is the human ego, which is responsible for all quarrels, which appear to be irresolvable. Theological bickering breaks the bond of brotherhood, for we are told in the Holy Qur'ān: *Allāh is the truth*. (Q 22:6)

All divine messengers who came from the time of Sayyidinā Ādam up to the time of our Prophet (ﷺ) came with truth:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ

Allāh has sent his messenger with guidance and with the Dīn of truth.

(Q 9:33)

And about the world we are told:

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ

I have not created the heavenly bodies and the earth and all between them except in truth.

(Q 15:85)

Consequently, what is the ideal of Islam for human life and the individual? What is the highest virtue that one has to achieve? Virtue of truth combined with sincerity and integrity, is what we have to achieve. Truth cannot be in a human being without moral integrity

and thus we will find that the greatest statement in the Qur'ān about the Divine *tawhīd* is *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ* (ch. 112). This *sūrah* has been named *Al-Ikhlāṣ* because the basis of a Muslim's '*aqīdah* in Allāh (swt) is truth and integrity. It is not just something vague or something about which we render lip service only. We may say the *shahādah* with our lips only, but remember the hypocrites of Madīnah have been condemned in the Holy Qur'ān. They used to proclaim that they believed in Allāh (swt) and the Last Day and in the Holy Prophet (ṣ) as Messenger of God, but Allāh says:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ ءَامَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَيَوْمَ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

Among the human beings are those who proclaim that they believe in Allāh and the last day, but Allāh bears witness that they are not believers.

(Q 2:8)

At another place, we are told:

إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُنَافِقُونَ قَالُوا نَشْهَدُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ
إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُهُ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَكَاذِبُونَ

O Prophet, these hypocrites come to you to proclaim that they believe in you as a messenger, but Allāh bears witness that they are indeed liars.

(Q 63:1)

The hypocrites say with their lips, but their hearts do not agree with it. It is mere lip service.

Belief in Islam is *not* belief unless it has to be clearly and positively proclaimed with one's tongue and considered as truth by the heart.

My brothers and sisters, Islam has provided clear guidance in this connection. There is no scope for misunderstanding or misinterpretation concerning unity among Muslims. Therefore, the

punishment for the community in violating this principle is severe. If there was any possibility of different interpretations about the principle of unity, then the punishment would have been lighter – but here the punishment is very severe.

May I say with all the sorrow and grief and great sense of shame that the Muslim community has been chastised very severely by Allāh (swt) because we have violated the Divine Law. We behave like hypocrites and proclaim one thing and act in another way, though we know what the truth is. We know that the manner in which we are acting is not what we have been prescribed by Islam. Our ‘ulamā’ have divided the category of *munāfiq* (hypocrite) into two: *Munāfiq fīl-aqīdah* (hypocrite in belief) and *munāfiq fīl-‘amal* (hypocrite in action).

Those who say that they are Muslims, but violate the Law in their deeds (‘amal). Consequently, the history of the Muslims in this world has to be read in this light. Do you know that the community that the Holy Prophet (ṣ) built up can be considered to be a community of supermen? They were so different from other human beings. They possessed a tremendous power of *īmān billāh*, that the greatest of obstacles and the mightiest of armies could not withstand their impact. The whole world trembled before them although they were just a handful.

This progress continued during the time of Sayyidinā ‘Umar (ra) and the regime of Sayyidinā ‘Uthmān. Issues came up on the basis of which the *ummah* gave the appearance of division and Sayyidinā ‘Uthmān became the first martyr with the dagger of a so-called Muslim. Sayyidinā ‘Ali was killed, Sayyidinā Ḥasan was poisoned, Sayyidinā Ḥusayn and his family were killed. They were killed by those who called themselves Muslims. Gibbon, the historian, wrote in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, that if ‘Umar had to live for another ten years, the entire world would have been Muslim!

To be sure, the ego came. Belief in Allāh continued to fade into an image and mere idea. It was no longer that vibrant, living and dynamic *īmān* or faith in Allāh (swt). The living nature of that *īmān* paralysed

gradually, and that was the “rope” of Allāh or *ḥabl-Allāh*. The better the *īmān*, the better or greater will be the unity, and the better will be the character. Naturally, when there are people who call themselves Muslims and they stage all these atrocities against Muslim leaders and good Muslims, what can be said about their *īmān*? The result was that Muslims lost the prize right at the moment when they were going to have it all. Those who were responsible did not understand at the time what was going to befall this *ummah*. Of course, this *ummah* had been built up in a strong manner by a masterhand – the Holy Prophet (ṣ). The *ummah* had that vitality that in spite of all the obstacles and handicaps, it could continue in power for centuries. But the breakdown was inevitable.

Please Muslims, take a lesson from it. How much damage through disunity, have we caused ourselves? Read the history of the Muslim struggle for unity. When Muslims had established themselves in Spain with all the glory, the great ‘Abd al-Raḥmān went into France to face the combined armies of Charlemagne. The Muslim army gained the upper hand and they were victorious. It was at the battle of Portiers, a few miles from Paris, which was a decisive battle for the Muslims in Europe. What happened? The Muslim army consisted of two groups: Arabs and Berbers. The devil inspired into their minds as to who was going to get the better share. Fighting with one another started during the night. This information reached the ears of Charlemagne, who was retreating with his army, and he returned to attack the Muslims as they were fighting amongst themselves. The enemy attacked with the utmost violence and the victorious Muslim army had to flee to the plains of France. Not only did they have to flee the plains of France, but ultimately also the plains of Spain.

This is the bitter pill of disunity. It caused the glorious Muslim Empire and Muslim civilisation of Spain to be blotted out of existence. These Muslims who had gone to Spain with a very small army under Ṭāriq had conquered the whole of Spain. After they established their kingdom, the different governors of different provinces thought about this poison of disunity.

Their egos ruled. Each governor wanted to become the chief ruler of Spain and sided with the armies of Isabella and Ferdinand on the

temptation of getting the throne of another governor who was a Muslim. This is the history of Muslim Spain. Finally, the Muslims lost Spain. They were killed in large numbers and all trace of their glorious civilisation was blotted out.

The same happened in India where Muslims ruled for about eight hundred years (977–1857 A.D.). When the British, who were just a handful, came to India, Muslims worked as their agents against the Islamic Empire. There was Mir Ja'far in Bengal and Šādiq in South India who played this role. It was only disunity between Muslims that brought their downfall as rulers of India.

Recently, I read a South African newspaper in Johannesburg. A story appeared on the front page of a man called Chaid Benton who died recently. This man was a so-called “hero”. He came from England, travelled around Africa and ultimately became the “kingmaker” in Morroco. This man aided the leaders of rebellion in Morroco. When Al-Hafith raised the banner of rebellion against Sultan ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Benton aided the rebel leader and was responsible for the change of government. For him it was a game to replace one Muslim Sultan after another. Ultimately, Morroco became so weak that the French came in and made it a “protectorate”.

What do you think about the *īmān* of those Muslims who were behaving like stooges at the hands of those non-Muslims? They were ruining their faith and damaging their name, their community and their country! What do you think of their *īmān*?

If Islam means a mere formal ritualism, accepted only as a cult and not the transforming alchemy, or as a comprehensive code of life of *īmān* in Allāh (swt), then it is just a philosophical idea and not a religious truth. Then all these happenings are possible.

My dear friends, pardon me if you feel insulted, but I am one of you. This world Muslim community, according to the statistics of the U.N.O., comprises seven hundred million souls (1970). These seven hundred million Muslims are to be found all over the world. We are seven hundred million! *Allāhu-Akbar*! But we are not worth seven

cents in the world. We are seven hundred million straws that one match-stick can turn into ashes. We are not seven hundred million Muslims when other human beings can control us so easily.

In today's newspaper, an article appeared about Jordan. Mind you, the ruler of Jordan, King Hussein, calls himself a "sayyid", a descendant of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). The Israeli cabinet decided that if they find that King Hussein's throne is in danger, then Israel would help him to ensure that he would remain as ruler. *Allāhu-Akbar!* What a friendship! These two, known to be the worst enemies. The American senate and the president are all the time worrying how to save King Hussein whose country has been devastated by the bombs supplied by the U.S.A. That same community which has been uprooted from its home by America? What love and affection can America have for this man and the Kingdom of Jordan?

I am not a politician neither do I wish to talk politics. I am talking about one thing only – the degradation of Muslims by eroding the principle of unity. It has fallen into the abyss. Today's news was that the so-called guerrillas and the army of King Hussein clashed again. Both are supposed to be Muslims. Innocent men, women and children in Amman lying buried in the debris in more than half of that big town. At whose hands?

Not the Israelis or the Americans! It is the Muslims who have done this to themselves. *Allāhu-Akbar*. The Holy Qur'ān proclaims:

وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ
خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَغَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ
عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا

He who deliberately kills his Muslim brother, his punishment is eternal hell fire and Allāh's special wrath descends upon him! And Allāh curses him, and Allāh has prepared for such a person a special punishment.

(Q 4:93)

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has proclaimed:

سَبَابُ الْمُسْلِمِ فُسُوقٌ وَقِتَالُهُ كُفْرٌ

To abuse a fellow Muslim is shirk and to kill him is *kufir*.

The person who kills a fellow Muslim *ipso facto* goes out of the fold of Islam. He is a *kāfir*.

My dear friends, I am a foreigner, I am not here to give blame. I know that I cannot act as an arbitrator. I have seen much of this world as I have been around the world several times. I have seen problems that emerged in the Muslim community and tried to straighten them – but to no avail. Who am I? Leaders of different groups honour me by requesting me to arbitrate in disputing matters. I spend all my time, but to no avail. What do they expect me to achieve? Remember, *hidāyah* is in Allāh's hands.

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ

It is true you will not be able to guide every one whom you love; but Allāh guides those whom He will.

(Q 28:56)

After a few days I have to leave, and the contending parties know this. If the real *īmān* and the understanding is not there between the contending parties, I cannot bring about transformation overnight. Not even in a century! What am I? My sincerity may be accepted by Allāh (swt) and He may help in this matter but He said clearly in the Holy Qur'ān and laid down a fundamental principle:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ

I am not going to change your condition unless you have that attitude that you want to change your condition.

(Q 13:11)

If that sincere attitude is there on both sides, whatever may be the differences, then Allāh's blessings is bound to come. May I remind you that great men like Sayyidinā Imām Abū Ḥanīfa (94–179/716–795), Imām Shāfi'ī, Imām Mālik, Imām Aḥmad Ibn Hanbal, Imām al-Ghazzālī (450–505/1058–1111), before whom I consider myself not even worthy of a particle of dust off their feet, could not do anything. They made their contributions as they could as individuals and as great godly scholars. But, to change those conditions that existed and to extricate the community from the abyss into which it was going, could hardly be done by those very great men. Compared to me, they are probably 100 times greater. What am I going to do, my dear friends? I can only stand here and speak.

وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَ يَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

Remind the followers of Islam what the principles of Islam are which will help them.

(Q 51:55)

This life on earth to which we attach so much importance, according to the Holy Qur'ān, it is merely a game.

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مَفَازٌ يَبْتَغُونَ فِيهَا مَتَاعًا وَمَا يَرْجُونَ فِيهَا عِزًّا وَلَا يَسْتَعِينُونَ فِيهَا

Know you all that the life of this world is but play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying (rivalry) among yourselves.

(Q 57:20)

It is just a series of fleeting shadows – dreams – and nothing beyond that. We are sleeping here and will wake up when we die, for in our sleep we are seeing a continuous dream. This is *ḥayāt al-dunyā*, and this is what our great *imāms* have taught. The term of life that we possess about which none of us know when it is going to end:

وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ

Nor does any one know in what land he is to die.

(Q 31:34)

But this is a precious opportunity according to what the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) taught us:

اعْمَلْ لآخِرَتِكَ كَأَنَّكَ تَمُوتُ غَدًا

Work for the life hereafter as if thou art going to die positively tomorrow.

This life here is like the stock of an ice-vendor. He buys the ice from the factory and invests a capital in order to obtain a profit. But he gets back only that much of money in accordance with the quantity of ice he is able to sell. That portion that turns into water is lost in the earth and unreclaimable. All that we do out of love for this world, is like the ice that turned into water and is lost in the earth.

مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ

What is with you must vanish: what is with Allāh will endure.

(Q 16:96)

الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَاقِيَةُ الصَّالِحَاتُ
خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا

Wealth and sons are allurements of this world but the things that endure, are good deeds, but best in the sight of thy Lord as rewards and the best hope.

(Q 18:46)

My friends, in this short life we do not control anything but depend absolutely on the Mercy of Allāh (swt),

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ

Has not the time come for the believers that their hearts may melt in the remembrance of Allāh.

(Q 57:16)

Has the time not come that our hardened hearts may melt in fear of that accountability that stands before us? The nemesis and consequences of our evil actions that are to recoil like serpents and tighten around our necks. The problem of the importance of unity among Muslims should not have arisen. It is an insult to the Muslims. The problem of disunity on any account should not remain; it is the greatest insult for the Muslims. He who fears standing before his Lord on the Day of Judgement for rendering account, and he who abstains from ego worship, for him is the heaven or the Garden of Bliss.

فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَىٰ وَءَاثَرَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ

He who plunges himself into the storm of his own ego, forgetting his Lord, forgetting his unavoidable destiny, and loves the life of this world, his abode will be hell.

(Q 79: 37–39)

My brothers and sisters, for God's sake, Allāh (swt) has been extremely kind to us. He sent His greatest blessing on this earth when He raised His beloved Prophet (s). He says in the Holy Qur'an:

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ

Allāh did confer a great favour on the believers after they had been in manifest error.

(Q 3:164)

This blessing that has come to us – shall we not benefit from it? How unfortunate it will be if we do not. The first step to benefit from this blessing is to eradicate this ego. Remember the warning from the Holy Prophet (s) that *Iblīs* is not the enemy of God, but the enemy of man. The only enemy of God is the human carnal self: the ego. It has the audacity to stand before God – in this world where it is blind – but in the life to come it will tremble!

The ego, the enemy of God, take care of it, control it and become godly.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا رَبَّٰنِيِّنَ

O believers, become godly.

(Q 3:79)

That is the way to light, truth and greatness. The acceptance of the devil as one's master does not pay. The devil will go with clean hands on the Day of Judgement and will deny any involvement in acts of evil. *Iblīs* will say that he merely encouraged the motive to commit the sin, but did not sin himself and therefore he should be allowed to go scott-free! *Allāhu-Akbar!*

يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ ءَوَامِهِ ءَوَٰبِيهِ وَصَٰحِبَتِهِ ءَوَبْنِيهِ

That day when man shall flee from his own brother, his mother, his father, his wife and children.

(Q 80:34–36)

And the leaders, let them not feel inflated and elated, whoever they may be, because if they misguided anyone, then that person is going to stand before Almighty Allāh and say in his plea to Allāh:

رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكُبَرَاءَنَا فَأَضَلُّونَا السَّبِيلَا
رَبَّنَا آتِهِمْ ضِعْفَيْنِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَالْغَنَمَ لَعْنَا كَبِيرَا

O Lord we were ignorant people, we were not leaders, we were merely masses, we obeyed our leaders, they misguided us. O Lord, today when thou art going to punish us for our evil deeds, give these leaders double chastisement and curse them!

(Q 33:67–68)

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 4

Philosophy of the *Shahādah*

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those who are with him are strong against Unbelievers but mercy personified to one another.

(Q 48:29)

The universal message of Islam which is delivered more than fourteen hundred years ago was a multi-dimensional message. It consists of guiding principles for a successful life on earth and in the life hereafter.

The guidance which the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) brought is not confined to any one particular aspect of human life, but is the most comprehensive guidance. This guidance refers to the spiritual and the moral aspects. At the same time, it refers to the economic, political and all other facets of human life pertaining to the individual as well as the community.

The key to individual and community happiness, peace and prosperity can be found in the teachings of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). He laid down a basic foundation which consists of two principles, which are encapsulated in the *kalimah al-shahādah*:

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

*I testify that there is no god except Allāh and I testify that
Muḥammad is His Messenger.*

The philosophy (and the wisdom) enshrined in the *kalimah al-shahādah*, is vast and deep. It is this *kalimah al-shahādah* which bifurcates itself into the different branches of human life and applies itself in order to produce a unified guidance in the field of thought, as well as action.

The most important point I wish to make here is that a person is not a Muslim merely by pursuing a certain set of rituals or by proclaiming – formally – his belief in certain verities. Actually, he is the pilgrim of eternity who tries to experience the Eternal Being, i.e. Allāh (swt) and to transform his personality on that basis.

The *kalimah al-shahādah* has become a practice. When a child is born and grows up, the parents teach him to speak their language without learning the grammar. The same, my dear friends, has happened to the *kalimah al-shahādah*.

I am not saying that the formal declaration of the *kalimah al-shahādah* is something worthless. What I mean is that it is not the goal. In every journey there is a starting point, a means or vehicle and there is a goal. The starting point is merely the recital with goodwill and clear conscience of the *kalimah al-shahādah*. The vehicle with which this journey as “pilgrim of eternity” is undertaken, is the model or example of the Holy Prophet (s), as we have been told:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

In the life of the Holy Prophet of Allāh you have a good example...

(Q 33:21)

that we have to imitate. Every one of us is on the road to eternity.

The Muslim, Hindu, Christian, Jew and atheist are all governed by an immutable law. They were sent down here to the earth to perform a certain function under the Law of Almighty Allāh. All have to move regardless of whether they perform the function correctly or not, guided or misguided, on the right or wrong path. They cannot just stay behind, for the Holy Qur'ān says:

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Everything belongs to Allāh and our return is to Him.

(Q 2:156)

By free choice or under compulsion, every human being is heading towards that day and that occasion when he or she will stand before his or her Creator to render account. This world is for Allāh because this world has been created by Him and is owned by Him alone, without any partner, for He is “*waḥdahū la sharīkalahu*”. Thus, because He owns this world, He owns all human beings, and He also owns the destiny of all human beings. This entire caravan of humankind is heading towards Him. It cannot stop. Whether Hindu or Muslim, Christian or atheist – everybody is heading towards Him.

The fact is that we are conscious of evaluating ourselves and of other human beings on the basis of two principles that exist simultaneously all the time, that is, the principle of good and evil.

We condemn evil, for by our very nature we are so constituted that whatever is shown to us to be good, we approve of and praise. Allāh (swt) says in the Holy Qur'ān:

وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ

The life of this world and the life of human beings is built upon two opposing principles.

(Q 51:49)

The day comes and then follows the night. This is the contrast.

يُقَلِّبُ اللَّهُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ

Allāh alternates the night and the day. In this is a lesson for those who want to grasp the reality of things.

(Q 24:44)

The lesson is not for those who want to walk like dumb-driven cattle or like the blind, but for those who try to understand the nature of life and what the destiny of life is which can be rationally accepted by human beings to be their proper destiny. For them is a lesson in this dual principle of contrast.

The day is bright and the night is dark. The day brings energy and vitality to proceed further, and to take up another day's work. When the sun sets, the energies decline and it is human nature to seek some place where he can take refuge during the night. Most creatures, cattle, birds and even plants are also conscious of the fact that the daytime is the working time and night time is the time for rest. Allāh (swt) clearly states in the Holy Qur'ān:

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا

And We made the night its cloak and the day a symbol of life.

(Q 78:10-11)

Consequently, the child becomes conscious of these two principles of light and darkness, happiness and sorrow, health and sickness, life and death, affluence and poverty. The human being has to lead his life as a slave of these two conflicting principles. In his state of affluence if he meets friendship, love and affection from others in his business or other enterprises, then he is happy. This he calls good. When he meets the contrary, he is unhappy and calls it evil. Good and evil perpetuate and run all through life so that it is impossible for a human being to come across only that which is considered by him to be good. He also has to taste evil. It is also impossible for a human being to always have evil and never to taste the good. It is God's good

world. Evil cannot overpower good in a manner to cause it to vanish completely. I am coming to a very important point here. This is not mere philosophy.

Most of our miseries, if not all, are based upon a wrong understanding of “our selves” and our surroundings. It is easy for a person to capture the good aspects of life so far as it pleases him, but it is very difficult for a person to bestow good on others because the human being by nature is selfish. Human selfishness stems from insecurity in this life. If he had that security, he would never have liked to be selfish at all. But he has to be selfish basically, because he is always confronted with the image of impending catastrophe or evil if he is not on guard all the time. Thus we find that most human beings including the Muslims, who should behave better, are unable to understand their mission as human beings in terms of good and evil which exist here. If a person meets evil from another person, his immediate reaction is to fly into rage under the impact of his animal self. The animal self is the seat of desires. Thus, “I have been insulted, therefore, whatever is at my disposal, I am going to hit back”. And here starts all the miseries in the individual’s life, family or communal life.

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said something different from what we normally feel under the impact of our animal self. He said: “Anger eats away *īmān* as fire eats away the straw or wood.”

This is a clear principle laid down by him. But I have seen in my travels around the world that some “very good Muslims” can’t keep their anger under control and don’t feel that they are betraying their declaration of the *shahādah*.

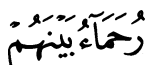
This problem of the principle of good and evil has been there since the very beginning of human life on this earth. Consequently, every wise man or prophet who came, whether to India, Africa, or Europe, never advocated evil against evil. You will find the teachers of mankind becoming very idealistic, sometimes to a degree where they become irrational. The sermon on the mount (of Prophet ‘Īsā) is a good example. The Christians call him the Prince of Peace, but I doubt whether Jesus actually preached it, because if you take this principle

literally, we discover it is something irrational.

In the sermon on the mount they are taught: “If anyone slaps thee on the right cheek, present to him the left cheek also. If anyone takes away thy coat, give him thy overcoat also”. This is the teaching of the sermon on the mount, but however noble it might appear, and however idealistic and sublime, it is something that is against human nature.

It is possible for a human being, if he rises higher in the moral scale, to forgive another person. If a person slaps him on the cheek, he may forgive him, but it is against human nature to present his left cheek also! This is absolutely against human nature. The only thing possible is to forgive an insult, damage or harm that has been done.

Forgiveness is always the direction wise men moved in trying to bring peace by removing from human beings all those miseries and agonies that have come to them as a consequence of conflict. It is very natural that every human being should come across conflict, for every human being is a bottled personality. All human beings are mutually exclusive. No two human beings are alike and consequently there must be a clash between them. Here comes the moral principle of how a Muslim should behave. It is from this point of view that I recited the verse:



It is the characteristics of the Muslims that they are ‘mercy personified’ to one another.

(Q 48:29)

If they don’t behave like that, they are not Muslims, whatever else they may do. The Holy Qur’ān describes the qualities of a Muslim to distinguish clearly whether he is behaving accordingly or not. The Qur’ān has not left it to our own wishful thinking or our own inner reactions or our own peculiar manner of thinking. May I add that the teaching which the Qur’ān has given us is an extremely rational one. It has taken into consideration the different levels of the moral tone of human beings and does not treat all human beings the same like

the sermon on the Mount . “... if anyone slaps *thee* on the right cheek.” Here, *thee* refers to all human beings.

The Qur’ān, however, is conscious of differences between human beings in connection with their moral and spiritual development; the limitations of their inner temperament which is mostly physical. Thus the first principle laid down by the Qur’ān was:

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا فَمَنْ عَفَا
وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ

The recompense of evil is an evil in the light measure. But whoever forgives for the sake of reform, for the sake of making the other party behave better and does not punish the guilty party, the reward is with Allāh. Allāh does not like those who transgress the bounds of justice.

(Q 42:40)

If anybody slaps you once, you may slap him back. That is permitted. Here the Qur’ān is speaking of the law of equity in the court of Justice, not our personal human dealings. This law of equity deals with that level where the parties concerned do not settle the matter between themselves but take the matter to court. Then after giving consolation to the aggrieved party, Allāh (swt) says that He sanctions recompense in equal measure. Here the Holy Qur’ān has given the solution of conflict at two levels. The first being the level of equity, ie. revenge in equal measure and the second being the level of forgiveness which is more meritorious in the eyes of Allāh.

Then the Holy Qur’ān goes beyond that. It lays down the Law for those who might aspire to a higher status as human beings.

وَلَا تَسْتَوِ الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ
فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ



Good and evil are not things of the same category. Always meet the challenge of evil with that which is good. When between two of you there is enmity, there is the possibility that under the pressure of your higher moral behaviour, he (the other) may be ashamed of his conduct and may become your friend.

(Q 41:34)

Light and darkness are not of the same category. You cannot fight darkness with darkness. Therefore the command is to “*challenge evil with good.*” If one is confronted with darkness, try to procure any source of light, even if it is a matchstick. Abusing darkness is not helping you. The only source of help to you is whatever source of light you might procure and use. Although the gloom of that darkness is so immense that the small light that you procured will at least dispel the darkness in your immediate surroundings.

The Qur'ān advises that when a Muslim meets with evil, or is abused, should not return with abuse, for then he is fighting darkness with darkness. When anyone does any evil to you, try to do something good, which in the end may lead to friendship.

This is what Allāh (swt) is saying. But Allāh (swt) warns us here to adopt the behaviour of meeting the challenge of evil with good cannot be adopted by every person; but

وَمَا يُلْقِهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلْقِهَا إِلَّا ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ

It can only be adopted by those who cultivate the quality of ṣabr and it can be practised only by those who cultivate magnanimity.

(Q 41:35)

The person who cultivates the quality of *ṣabr*, of serenity and calmness, perseverance, patience and magnanimity, he alone can walk this road.

May I remind you that there is not a single teaching in the Holy Qur'ān that has not been practised by Muslims. It is not just a sermon on the mount about which nobody can prove that Jesus (as) himself actually practised it. Whatever Islam has taught, has been practised

by those human beings who have set a noble example of the Islamic teachings. Let us take an example from the life of Imām Abū Ḥanīfa (ra) (81–150/700–767) .

He was a versatile scholar and an intellectual giant, head and shoulders above the other ‘*ulamā*’. The other ‘*ulamā*’ became jealous of him and employed a person to abuse the Imām on his way home from the court building. This man had to provide a continuous mental torture to the Imām. Naturally, being a person of high stature, the Imām would not produce a counter abuse. This abuse went on for a number of years. However, one day, when the Imām returned from one of his council meetings, his abuser was not there. Upon enquiry, it was discovered that the abuser had been arrested in a gambling den and was in jail. Imām Abū Ḥanīfa (ra) immediately went to the police station and enquired from the police officer about a very good friend of his that was being held there. The officer was shocked that a friend of this great Imām could be in jail, and his shock was even greater when he heard the person’s name. The officer said: “We have been waiting all along to arrest this abuser of yours and you call him your very good friend?” The Imām confirmed that the man was his friend and the abuser was released on the Imām’s plea.

As the man came out of jail, the Imām got hold of his hand and said: “I am very sorry that you could not provide me with extra virtues and I hope that you will commence your job immediately.” The man was so ashamed and fell at the feet of Imām Abū Ḥanīfa and repented.

The police officer asked Imām Abū Ḥanīfa to explain how the abuser could be his friend, and he replied: “The Holy Prophet (s) taught the Divine Law, that if a person injures or abuses you, then you get virtues to that extent from the account of that person, and if there is none, then from the general account. Thus the highest thing to earn is virtue, therefore, who can be a greater friend than the one who gives you virtues as a daily gift which is the highest blessing from Allāh (swt)?”

My dear brothers and sisters, don’t take this as just another story. Try to think about this conflict between good and evil and what Allāh

(swt) has taught us and what His beloved Prophet (s) considered to be the behaviour of a Muslim.

People nowadays talk about: “He who stands making *salām* in honour of the Prophet (s) is a *mushrik*. He who does something in such a manner becomes a *kāfir*.” Nobody talks about the morals of a Muslim while this is the very foundation of Islam.

Nobody tells Muslims what their behaviour should be like and what characteristics they should possess. The characteristics of the Muslim as mentioned in the Holy Qur’ān are numerous. Let me give you some examples:

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ
هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا

The servants of the Merciful Lord are only those who walk on the earth in humility. And when they are confronted with mischief, these true Muslims say: ‘Our mission is only peace’

(Q 25:63)

Those who walk on the earth in a light step are those who are grateful to God and to man and have goodwill towards all. It is also those who behave like the refreshing morning breeze causing the buds to smile into flowers, bringing fragrance, vigour, happiness and peace to human beings. That is the role of the Muslim. In every community you will find people whom the Qur’ān describes as *jāhil* – ignorant people. It is the work of ignorant people alone to start mischief.

When true believers are confronted with the *jāhils*, they are not going to entangle themselves with them. If you abuse me, I am not going to abuse you. If you talk aloud, I won’t shout back. My mission as a Muslim is peace – *Salām!* don’t engage in wrangles and quarrels. Of course, other qualities have also been mentioned.

وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوا كِرَامًا

Muslims are those, (that) when they are confronted with anything that is vain or worthless, they bypass that event with dignity and grace.

(Q 25:72)

I have mentioned only one basic aspect that has been made obligatory by Allāh (swt) in connection with Islamic life. I feel sad when I go from one community to the other and find that some people who are considered to be religious in their external outlook are the most mischievous on the face of the earth. Islam becomes a tool for mischief until the community is destroyed and divided into various parties and groups and matters go to the extent of litigation and court cases.

I have yet to meet many a Muslim who thinks in terms of the improvement of their personal character – and thereby the improvement of the moral behaviour of the community as a whole – in order that joy, peace and happiness may come to every Muslim home and heart.

My dear brothers and sisters. It is high time that we take stock of the situation. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has laid down clearly that high morality is the measure of *īmān*. He said:

أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُ خُلُقًا

The better the moral behaviour of a person, the greater is the *īmān*.

May I remind you in passing that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is Islam personified and he alone must be imitated. Although the Holy Prophet lived under the severest persecution, he never abused anyone, nor did his hand harm anyone. Remember, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was the one who led the armies against the infidels of Makkah in the Battles of Badr, Uhud, Hunayn, etc. In those days the commander-in-chief was always the target and in the forefront because it was a personal war. Unlike today where the commander-in-chief sits a thousand miles

away from the battlefield. Therefore, the main target of the infidels was the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), for they knew that if they could kill him, the Islamic movement would die. All their swords, arrows and spears were directed towards him. This is the miracle of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) which Muslims should remember.

Although the main attack was on his person, he only defended himself. His sword never harmed or even scratched his enemy. This was the manner he defended himself. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) about whom it was recorded that nobody was ever hurt by his tongue or his hand. In the worst moments of distress or persecution, the smile never left his face and the sweetness of his tongue never changed. This is the example he set for us!

We have an honest love for Islam, but my dear brothers and sisters, please learn to practise what Islam stands for. It does not stand for mere ritual. It is there primarily to transform us from human beings of a small stature into human beings of a high moral character. A poet said: "It is easier to kill a lion, but it is very difficult to control your ego." It develops into a raging storm immediately you raise your hand or tongue. If somebody abuses you once, the abuse is immediately increased against him. This is the *nafs al-ammārah* and anybody who cannot tame it, is a Muslim only in name. He is not a genuine Muslim because he is not pursuing the mission that was given to him as a Muslim.

My dear brothers and sisters, the Islamic way of life is grounded, oriented and founded in the highest spiritual idealism. To live for Allāh alone who is All Holy, All Good and All Perfect and to live in imitation of him, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) greater than whom no one was created in the entire creation. Remember, you have to carry the name of the greatest in Almighty Allāh's creation as *khalīfat-Allāh*. The responsibility is very great. We will have to guard against behaving wrongly for we will not only damage our own dignity but also insult the name of that holy personality of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). This is a crime which I don't think Allāh (swt) is going to forgive easily. He may forgive all crimes, but He says that the slightest insult to His beloved Prophet (ﷺ) and He will take away all your virtues. So beware

of this aspect and be very cautious of your moral behaviour.

Please understand once and for all that Islam is not merely ritualistic gymnastics or an exercise in sectarian differences of opinion. This is not Islam. Islam means intense love for the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and this intense love should manifest itself in changing your life. The *saḥābah* loved him and what was the consequence? They were changed from ordinary barbaric human beings into supermen, for whom the angels would come and bow. This is what the love of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) gave them.

We also love him, but we should also understand what the demands are of this love and how this love should be manifested. Of course, it should be manifested in remembering him because a person always remembers his beloved. The greater the love, the greater the remembrance. One cannot love someone and not remember that person. Some people say that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) brought the message and died, and what do we have with him now? This is not Islam, nor *īmān*. Remember, you do not know Almighty Allāh but you believe in Him because the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said that we must believe in Allāh (swt) with special qualities. We did not see Allāh, but he saw Allāh (swt). Thus if you love the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), you also love Almighty Allāh at the same time.

We heard the Holy Qur’ān from the lips of the Prophet (ﷺ) and because we love him and regard him as pure and holy and truthful, we agree with him. Thus, we know Islam only through the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). He is the basic personality in Islam and of *īmān*. The better your *īmān* in him, the better your Islam and your *īmān* in Allāh (swt). You cannot approach Allāh (swt) by bypassing the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and you cannot understand the Qur’ān by bypassing the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). He is the only teacher. He is the source of all blessing in this life and the hereafter. All the *awliyā’-Allāh* are his lieutenants, so cling to him in a manner that you may feel worthy of him and he may not feel sorry about you.

Do you know that the deeds of the entire *ummah* are presented to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) every week? He has a tremendous affection for his

ummah. Therefore, when our deeds go before him and they are not good, what a terrible agony should it not cause him? Take care of this! Try to mould your life according to his *sunnah*, for that is the way to salvation.

As ‘*allāmah* Iqbāl said: “Take thyself to the feet of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), for he alone is all religion – the whole religion! If you cannot become a true lover of him then all your prayers and deeds taken together makes of you an Abū Lahab and not a Muslim.”

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 5

Muḥammad The Prophet of Allāh

تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ
وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ

*Those Messengers We endowed with gifts, some above others. To
some of them God spoke, others He raised to degrees of honour.*

(Q 2:253)

This topic is based on the implication of the second part of the *kalimah al-shahādah*, i.e. *Muḥammadur rasūlullāh*. It refers to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and his personality. May I emphasise that it is more complicated than the first part of the *kalimah*, *lā ilāha illallāh*. There are numerous types of confusion and conflicting interpretations of *Muḥammadur rasūlullāh*, especially in this age of materialism.

Knowledge has different levels. The comprehension of knowledge varies from one person to the other. These confusions arise only because those who come forward to understand the problem try to view it with all their subjective limitations. Even those who say that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is just like our elder brother. Don't say they are dishonest, for they can only see thus far and no further.

Akbar Ilāhabādi said about the human being: “Maṣṣūr said, ‘I am The Truth’ (God) and Darwin said, ‘I am an ape.’”

When my friend heard these two opinions, he said: “Everybody thinks according to his understanding or ability of comprehension.” So neither Maṣṣūr nor poor Darwin can be blamed, for those were their visions as they saw it. Of course, there is the level in the realm of knowledge – the knowledge of objectivity and there has to be a standard to which different opinions are to be judged. Those who fall short must be forgiven for their limitations and should not form the basis of quarrels and fights between one another.

Consequently, opinions about the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) are at various levels, but those who have the knowledge of the higher order should be explored.

Allow me to explain something else first by way of example of a book:

- a) There is a person who understands only the alphabet in which the book is written and that is the sum total of his knowledge about the book.
- b) Then there is another person who knows the alphabet and has a rudimentary knowledge of the language in which that book is written – for instance, he may be able to translate the various passages at a higher level.
- c) The third person knows not only the alphabet and the language, but he also knows the subject on which the book has been written. His understanding of the book will be higher than the previous two.
- d) Then another person does not only know the alphabet, language and the subject, but also knows the inter-related subjects and the background of that subject. His knowledge will be higher than the previous three, and so it goes on.

A person views a landscape from the foot of a hill, another a few metres higher, a third one goes further up and another stands on top. The view of the person at the foot of the hill cannot be blamed as a lie; the poor fellow can only see that which is visible from the foot of

the hill. The person who has gone a little higher is seeing just as much as he can see, don't say that he is a liar. Please understand this, I am not saying this to make you fight with one another or cause mischief.

I do not wish to excite trouble but I know, unfortunately, that there are some among the '*ulamā*' who talk for the sake of mischief only. I am not a professional '*ālim*' or preacher and I don't belong to any group. I belong to only one group and that is Islam – the group of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). But I must be honest with myself and I have been involved in the field of knowledge for about fifty years – only for the sake of understanding Islam, and not in the least from a political point of view!

Every person comprehends things according to his standpoint, his capacity of perception, conception and comprehension. Thus, you will find some people saying that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was a mortal just like us and that is where it ends. But you will find an intellectual giant such as the late Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl (1290–1357AH/1873–1938AD), who is an intellectual giant incomparable with anyone before him except Rūmī saying about the Holy Prophet (ﷺ):

That possessor of knowledge of the path of guidance, that terminator of the office of divine messengership, that leader of all creation, who illumined the sands below the feet of the caravan of his followers into the illumined soil of Sinai; the Prophet (ﷺ) from the point of view of love, is the first and it is he who is the last. And it is he who is the standard between right and wrong in this entire universe and it is also he who is *Yā-Sīm* and *Tā-hā*. (the names of love given to him by the Almighty Allāh).

Everybody gives the verdict according to his understanding and level of comprehension.

What does the Holy Qur'ān say about the personality of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). He had a double status: one aspect of his personality is cosmic and the other is mundane. The Holy Qur'ān says:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

O Prophet, I have not sent thee but as a mercy unto all the worlds.
 (Q 21:107)

When one goes beyond the earth and humanity, you are on the cosmic level. Thus, he is a mercy for the entire cosmos. This is his cosmic status.

About his mundane status the Holy Qur'ān says:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ

O Prophet, proclaim, 'I am a human being as you are human beings'.
 (Q 18:110)

Now, here many people have stumbled. This verse can be translated in two ways: one is the way of *kufr* and the other is the way of *īmān*. It has been translated by some as “like you” – which leads to *kufr*. If anybody says that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is like X, Y or Z, he is speaking the greatest falsehood against the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*. No human being is like the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).

And what do they mean when they translate it in this ugly fashion? Like whom, the murderer, the adulterer, the robber or the devil incarnate? For among the human beings there are human beings of all types. Who is that standard person with whom you are going to compare the Holy Prophet with, if we say he is “like us”?

Or is it like the Jews who perceive God as only a magnified human being and nothing more? Can you conceive the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) as just like you or a little better than you are? Certainly not!

The connotation of the verse is to emphasise the humanity of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) in order that the Muslims may not fall prey (in view of his miraculous powers), to think that he is a god in any sense of the word. It is his divinity which is being denied.

We know that charcoal is pure carbon and diamond is pure carbon. It is only the frequency of the vibration of the molecules that makes them different. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is a human being. We are human beings too but he is like diamond and we are like charcoal! Would anyone like to exchange his diamond for a hundred bags of charcoal? There is a world of difference between the worth and value of the two. Therefore, between me and you and the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) there is a world of difference. Difference in terms of status, the constitution of his cosmic personality and his powers! What are these childish things about which people talk?

Now let us view his status from the mundane point of view. Let us try to understand his status as divine messenger. According to the Holy Qur'ān:

وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ

Allāh has sent his messengers to every community of the world.

(Q 13:7)

How does Allāh (swt) deal with all these Messengers and does he deal differently with the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)? Yes, he does, for no prophet can compare with him in status. The Qur'ān states that Adam was a prophet and so was Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus (as). Read the entire Qur'ān and you'll find that when Almighty Allāh addresses any of these prophets, He always addresses them by names such as O Adam, O Ibrahim. And He has not called the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) by name even once in the Holy Qur'ān. Is it meaningless? Remember, it is not just by chance. Here, Allāh wants to demonstrate the grandeur of the position of the Holy Prophet and the special relationship the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has with Him.

Why do we not call a person by his name? There are two reasons:

- Either out of intense love or respect. A cultured person, at least, will not call his father by his name.
- Your child has an Islamic name, but he or she has a pet name like "darling" or "honey".

Here Allāh (swt) demonstrates that he loves the Prophet (ﷺ) intensely, and that is why he does not address him in the same manner as the other prophets. He also wants the Muslims to honour the Prophet (ﷺ). Allāh is showing us that He is not calling His Prophet (ﷺ) by name, and therefore we should do the same.

Allāh (swt) says in the Holy Qur'ān:

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَرْفَعُوْا اَصْوَاتَكُمْ
 فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوْا لَهُۥ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ
 لِبَعْضٍ اَنْ تَحْبَطَ اَعْمَالُكُمْ وَاَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُوْنَ

O Believers, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Holy Prophet and do not talk to him in the fashion that you talk among yourselves, otherwise all your virtues will be annulled.

(Q 49:2)

What is this status? You can forgive any insult done to you, but you will not forgive any insult given to your beloved! This is the Law of Love.

Those who rose to spiritual eminence have said: “There is a place where respect is to be offered. That place is more delicate than the 'Arsh of God. Here when great spiritual luminaries come to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) they come trembling.”

What are Muslims being taught? They have lost their source of grace and they feel that they can get grace from Almighty Allāh alone. The source of grace established by Allāh is only through the personality of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). There is no other source of grace. Let us read the Qur'ān and bear in mind, however, that all Divine Messengers are in the highest category of human beings. And amongst those highest of Divine Messengers, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has been distinguished. At certain places he has been addressed as *Yā ayyuḥan-nabīy* or *Yā ayyuḥar-rasūl*, “O Prophet” or “O Messenger”. These titles are in respect of his function.

This is the formal level but Allāh (swt) addresses him from another level. He says: *Yā ayyuhal-muzzammil* and *Yā ayyuhal-muddaththir*, “O Thou who art wrapped up in thy mantle”, and “O thou wrapped in garments.” This shows the level of intimacy of friendship. The rise from the official level to the level of friendship.

Then there is a further rise, *Yā Sīn*. What is the meaning of *Yā Sīn*? Love has screens which cannot be penetrated by outsiders. The meaning is a mystery between the Lover and the Beloved. Then he is addressed as *Ṭā Hā*. We don’t know the meaning, but we can realise from what comes after that it must be an epithet of love, because a message of love is given after that:

طه مَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَىٰ

O Prophet, I have not sent unto you the Qur’ān to put you to hardship.

(Q 20:1–2)

This is his place among the prophets – the highest among them.

Not only is the Prophet (ﷺ) venerable and honourable, even the soil that he walked on becomes honourable, for the Qur’ān says:

لَا أَقْسِمُ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ وَأَنْتَ حَلٌّ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ

I swear by this city of Makkah, (not because it contains the Ka’bah), and I bestow honour on this city because you live inside this city.

(Q 90:1–2)

Let us come back to his cosmic status as mentioned in the Holy Qur’ān in these two verses:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

O Prophet I have not sent thee but as a mercy unto all the worlds.

(Q 21:107)

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ

Verily there has come unto you the light and the book which is clear in its exposition of guidance.

(Q 5:15)

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was commissioned by Almighty Allāh to explain every intricate verse of the Holy Qur'ān. The Holy Qur'ān says:

وَأَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ
مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“I have sent you to make clear what has been revealed ...”

(Q 16:44)

There is a *ḥadīth* narrated by Jābir ‘Abdullāh bin Anṣārī (ra). This Companion says that he asked the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) as to what the first thing was that Allāh (swt) created, and the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) replied:

أَوَّلُ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ نُورِيْ

O Jābir, the first thing God Almighty created in the entire universe was (the Nūr Muḥammad) my light.

This authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) *ḥadīth* compels us to side with those commentators who say that it means that Allāh (swt) is referring here to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) as *nūr*.

Thus it has been the consensus of Muslim belief for centuries which is only being challenged now in this period of degeneration under the impact of modern materialism! The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is the centre of all creation and from His *nūr*, Almighty Allāh created everything in the universe. According to the *ḥadīth*:

أَنَا مِنْ نُورِ اللَّهِ وَالْخَلْقُ كُلُّهُمْ مِنْ نُورِي

I am from the Light of God and everything came from my light.

Remember, the *min* (from) here is *min* ‘*sababiyyah*’. “I am because of the light of Allāh.” This deals with the cosmic personality of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).

The *Nūr Muḥammad* is the “first creation” of Allāh (swt), which has been clearly mentioned in the Holy Qur’ān. This one “thing” that He created as the “first thing” has far-reaching implications. Even ‘*ulamā*’ have asked me where this is mentioned in the Qur’ān. Let us read the Qur’ān:

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has been asked to proclaim:

وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

I am the first among Muslims.

(Q 6:163)

What does the word “Muslim” mean according to the Qur’ān? Here we call everybody or anybody a Muslim. Do we realise that we are all born Muslim by accident? When the Qur’ān uses this word, it uses it in the genuine sense of the word. “Muslim” means he or she who submits himself or herself entirely to the Will of God, because: *Everything in the heavens and the earth is Muslim.* (Q 3:83)

Combine these two verses and we’ll see that he is before the sun, the moon and everything that there is in creation. Because he is the first to be created by Allāh (swt), there is no other thing in the entire universe that is dearer to Him and there is nothing in this universe that can approach Allāh (swt), *but* through him! The entire universe, everything, has come after him and through him, therefore anyone in this universe who wants to approach Allāh, can do so only through him.

And this we have been told clearly. Allāh (swt) is Almighty and has no need to make the Holy Prophet (ṣ) as the intermediary or *wasīlah*. (This is the doubt in some people's minds.) He has no need for He is Self-Existent and Self-Subsistent, but this is how He made the universe. He made the angels as His intermediaries in performing certain functions. Does the existence of the angels prove that there is something wrong with the greatness of Allāh (swt)? This never comes to your minds! But when it is said that the Holy Prophet (ṣ) is the intermediary, some people become angry and say it is “*shirk*”. This “*shirk*” is not committed when you believe in the angels? Is there anything wrong with your faith?

The Qur’ān is very clear that the Holy Prophet (ṣ) is the *wasīlah*.

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ
 وَأَسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا

If these people who transgress the divine laws and damage their personalities, come to you O Prophet, (and after coming to you), they seek pardon of Allāh for their sins and you also seek pardon for them, then most surely they will find Allāh, Most forgiving and merciful.

(Q 4:64)

This is not mere interpretation. The Qur’ān makes the Holy Prophet (ṣ) the *wasīlah* and this verse was not only meant for the Companions of the Holy Prophet (ṣ). A person raises the credit side of his account with Almighty Allāh by mutual charity, through the Infinite Mercy and Love for all human beings. Without breaking His Law, Allāh (swt) established the way of emancipation of mankind from Hell through him whom He says:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

O Prophet, I have not sent you but as a mercy for all the worlds and in all the worlds.

(Q 21:107)

He is a mercy here for us and in the world to come. His third status is unknowable for us. The first one as *nabīy* or *rasūl*, the second one as *Ḥabībullah* (Beloved of Allāh). We can have some understanding of the first two, but about his third status the Qur'an says:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَهِيدًا

O Prophet! We have sent you as a witness.

(Q 33:45)

The word *shāhid* means *witness* and who can be witness except he who has seen that on which he is standing witness. Unless the Holy Prophet (s) has "seen" Allāh (swt), he cannot testify to be a witness. He is a witness that the universe or Allāh's creation is infinite as the Qur'an says:

قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مَدَادًا لَكَلِمَتِ رَبِّي لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ
أَنْ نَفِدَ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَدًا

Say: "If all the sea were ink for my Lord's words, the sea would indeed be exhausted before my Lord's words are exhausted, even if we were to add to it sea upon sea".

(Q 18:109)

If he has not seen the entire universe, how can he be a witness for it? He taught that there is *jannah* and how great the *jannah* is.

وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ السَّمَاءِ

The jannah encompasses the entire universe.

(Q 57:21)

How can he be a *shāhid* for the *angels* if he has not seen them? Thus, his third status is cosmic. In the *ḥadīth* we are told that he said, as reported by *Umm al-mu'minīn*, 'Ā'ishah *ṣiddīqah* (ra):

لِي مَعَ اللَّهِ وَقْتُ لَا يَسْعُنِي
 فِيهِمْ مَلَكٌ مُقَرَّبٌ وَمَا نَبِيٌّ مُرْسَلٌ

There is an aspect of my life when my personality is projected in that direction, then I am with Allāh and my time is with Him. It is at a level where no angel and no divine messenger can even witness as to what it is.

What can I say ? How can one explain this status of the Holy Prophet (ṣ). How could *Sayyidinā* Abū Bakr (ra), the greatest among the *ṣaḥābah*, or *Sayyidinā* 'Alī (ra) say what this status is? But we'll find insignificant "molvis", saying that the Holy Prophet (ṣ) was just a mortal or brother "like us"! *Allāhu Akbar*! It is an insult to human reason! It is an insult to the Qur'ān and to your *īmān*! You cannot damage the Holy Prophet (ṣ) in his status, but you are going to damage yourself. Beware of this.

From this station which he is speaking let me refer you to the happening of Prophet Mūsā (as) who was an eminent and great personality, unlike me and you:

رَبِّ أَرِنِي أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ قَالَ لَنْ تَرَنِي وَلَكِنْ أَنْظُرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ
 فَإِنْ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ تَرَنِي
 فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ رَبُّهُ الْجَبَلَ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا وَخَرَّ مُوسَى صَعِقًا

O Lord, I wish to see You. God said: You can never see me, however I will cast a very weak *tajalli* or radiation of My personality on the mountain. If this mountain can withstand the impact, you may have your wish. However, the mountain turned to ashes and Mūsā fainted.

(Q 7:143)

This happened to a great and holy man of Almighty Allāh. Today we have people who want to measure the knowledge of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). They are insulting only their intellect and human reason. The Holy Prophet is *al-shāhid* and the explanation is right there in the Holy Qur'ān in *Sūrah al-Isrā*. For what purpose was the Mi'rāj?

لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ أَيْنَأَنْتَ

... to show him and give him the knowledge of this entire cosmos and to make him the *shāhid*.

(Q 17:1)

To be a witness and then teach it to mankind, and not to teach on mere hearsay. It is our function to teach on the basis of mere hearsay, but not the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) for he was a *shāhid*.

See and observe this entire universe, pass through it and observe it from the highest point! *Allāhu Akbar*. How and with what grace did it happen! Read *Sūrah al-Najm* (Q 53:1-18).

Some people say that these verses refer to his meeting with the Archangel Jibrīl. How can it be? It is not the audience with Jibrīl that is mentioned here. He is not the 'abd of Jibrīl. He is the 'abd of Allāh (swt) alone.

Allāh (swt) revealed to him and bestowed on him knowledge at the point where he was. He was as near as the two ends of a bow, and Allāh (swt) bears witness that he went through this experience of direct vision of God in a manner that he was unaffected by it. Compare this experience with that of Nabī Mūsā! Here our beloved Prophet (ﷺ) is face to face with his Creator and this greatest of experiences could not shake his nerves.

If we illumine this room with 5 000-watt lamps, every one of us will lose the balance of our minds. How much would have been the power of *that* light? Therefore, what can one say about his status and the calibre of his personality? He was a human being, yes, but he is a diamond and I am charcoal! No human being can compare with him.

As a famous poet said: “Mūsā fainted on the impact of the radiations of only one of the attributes of God, but thou, O Prophet (ﷺ), see the very being of God with a smile.”

Then Allāh (swt) questions us, anticipating the twentieth century: “Do you doubt what he saw? The second time he saw what he saw, (it transcends all human powers) his eyes did not wink and he did not lose the slightest balance of his personality.” How do we describe this personality. Is it for an ant to say how big the Himalayas are? Is it for a moth to say how big the sun is? Is it for me to say how great the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is?

يَأْتِيهَا إِلَّا نَسْنُ مَا غَرَّكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ

O Man, what has deceived you about the greatness of your Lord?
(Q 82:6)

He who is capable of not only creating tiny human beings like me and you, but also a personality of the immeasurable status of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). Why do you challenge the power of Allāh (swt)? Do you make yourself the measure of the power of Allāh. Whoever does this is absolutely mad, for we are not the measure and none of us can dictate to Allāh (swt).

There is another problem that has become a source of confusion to the Muslims of today regarding the ‘ilm al-ghayb, or knowledge of the unseen. The *Sunni* Muslims of India and Pakistan have been divided into two perpetually hostile camps about this issue. The problem is really a very simple one and I don’t know why it has not been resolved.

Remember, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was given the knowledge of the entire universe. What is *ghayb* or absent for us was not *ghayb* for him. This matter requires understanding. The Holy Qur’ān says:

وَلَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبِ لَاسْتَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسْنِيَ السُّوءُ

O Prophet! Tell them that if I had known events that are hidden, then it would have been a lot of good for me and no calamity or evil would have touched me.

(Q 7:188)

This verse is brought out of context from the Holy Qur'ān to say that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) did not know about things of the unseen world. It is not true!

As far as the knowledge of the unseen goes, it is divided into two categories:

- the knowledge of the day-to-day events in a person's life;
- the knowledge of other verities, for example, the scientist cannot predict what is going to happen to him tomorrow, but he can accurately predict as to what will be the position of a particular planet tomorrow or next year.

Thus, between these two types of knowledge, there is a distinct difference, for the Holy Qur'ān says:

وَمَا هُوَ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ بِضَنِينٍ

He does not withhold the knowledge of the unseen from anyone.

(Q 81:24)

Now, unless the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) possessed the knowledge of the unseen, where does the question arise as withholding it or not withholding it ? So, in this verse it is affirmed that he possessed the knowledge of the unseen and in the other verse it is denied. Is there a contradiction in the Holy Qur'ān? No! The Qur'ān divides the field of knowledge into two:

- the serial order of the life of a person and
- about other verities and the nature of the universe as to how it functions and what the laws are that govern it.

It is an act of mercy on the part of Allāh (swt) that He has kept the events of day to day occurrences in a person's life hidden or absent from his knowledge.

وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ مَّاذَا تَكْسِبُ غَدًا
 وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ

No human being knows what is going to befall him tomorrow and no human being knows where he is going to die.

(Q 31:34)

It is a great blessing that Allāh (swt) has kept this knowledge hidden from us. It is through this process of lack of knowledge of what is going to happen, that religious life can be possible. Life in devotion to Allāh (swt) can be possible only in this manner and the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said:

الْإِيمَانُ بَيْنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالرَّجَاءِ

Faith in Allāh remains alive when a person continues to be between fear and hope.

This process of fear and hope which exists in the lives of human beings always keeps them fixed in the direction of Allāh (swt). They are seeking His protection all the time against any possibility of any danger and they are asking Him to bestow His blessings on them.

If a human being should know what is going to happen to him tomorrow, good or evil, he shall have no need to turn to Allāh. Therefore it is in the very essence of ‘ubūdiyyah – submissive devotion to Allāh (swt) – that the human being should remain ignorant of what is going to happen tomorrow. That is why the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has forbidden Muslims to dabble in astrology and astrological predictions.

It is really a divine blessing, for to know what is going to happen tomorrow, takes away from you the foundation upon which religion or spiritual life is built. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was the ‘abd of Allāh (swt) and the “highest” creature of God, and consequently, Almighty Allāh did not give him the knowledge of the day to day occurrences so that

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he may stay in that state of *'ubūdiyyah*. That was essential, for it is the state of *'ubūdiyyah* which is the highest honour for a human being.

It is not to become God with a small “g” or to become God incarnate. It is only the physical, personal events in life that the first verse bears reference to, for example, “If I had been given knowledge of the events that are to happen in my life, then I would avoid anything that is to befall me.”

This knowledge was not given to him, but that *basic* knowledge of the properties, the *origin* and *destiny* of things, about the entire cosmos was given to him.

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 6

The Inner Dimensions of the *Sunnah*

There is great misunderstanding about the *sunnah* of our Beloved Prophet (ﷺ); especially about the dimensions of the *sunnah* and the implication of the word *sunnah*. As I mentioned at a previous occasion, we have reduced Islam to a cult and consequently we have fallen prey to dogmatism (accepting without question) and ritualism. The *sunnah* such as a certain type of dress, wearing of a beard, and having more than one wife, is viewed in the same way.

Sunnah means ‘way of life’ which implies that which the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) practised. The ritualistic approach is responsible for our lack of understanding of what Islam stands for. All human activity, individual or social, consists of an inner and outer side of life. I am wearing a particular type of dress, which places me in the category of “‘*ulamā*’”. Therefore, people are inclined to think that I am a holy person. They may not know me or my character or inner aspects of my life. They may kiss my hand, which is fine, but, is this what Islam stands for?

Islam has emphasised the spirit first and the body next. In the human personality itself the primary importance belongs to the spirit or the soul. It is the soul which sees, hears, talks which the body is only a medium for it. In the same manner the inner aspects of life are fundamental. Islam has come to build up those inner dimensions of life.

The inner and outer aspects of life must harmonise, therefore the outer aspects of life have also been emphasised – not as such by Islam, but by the later *fuqahā'* or jurists. For instance, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said that you can wear any dress as long as you do not violate the principle of *ḥayā'*, (modesty, decency) and you do not imitate the religious dress of any other community.

Now, examine this principle. Look at the fact that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) would wear the same type of dress that Abū Jahl or Abū Lahab wore. Why? If there had to be sanctity in dress then why did the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) not prescribe a new dress which God Almighty had prescribed for the Muslims? Why, as God's Prophet did he continue to wear the same dress that he wore before and the same that was worn by the *kuffār* of Arabia? Why? This is a very important point to bear in mind. When people came to see him and presented him with Roman gowns and Yeminite gowns from Christians and Jews, he put them on and made use of them. Why?

Present day Muslims cultivate an uncommitted attitude towards Islam. In my country, Pakistan for example, some religious people say that if you wear a quadrangular *kurta*, a triangular pyjama and a two pointed or hexagonal cap then you are following a *sunnah*. I am amazed by this saying because the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) never wore any such dress and neither did the *Khulafā' al-rāshidīn* (Righteous Caliphs). Where did they get this *sunnah*? It is quite alright that when we wear an English or Western suit then we are damaging our own dignity. There is no doubt about it, but this is not a distinctive point between Islam and *kufr*.

If all the English people were to embrace Islam would you want them all to wear your pyjama? Therefore, distinctions ought to be there, but all factors have to be taken into consideration. Similarly in the case of the beard. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) had a beautiful beard, but Abū Lahab also had a beard, most Christians and pagans of Arabia also had flowing beards because Gillette and other blade manufacturers were not yet in existence. So, if the Prophet had a beard and a person imitates him in keeping a beard out of love for him, it is then an act of piety. But then after that he is walking the razor's edge because

after keeping this signboard of love for the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), he has to be very careful in his behaviour not to insult the memory of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) by keeping that beard.

Furthermore, our religious thought of today is based on the assumption that as long as the uniform of Muslims is there, no training as Muslims is required. The uniform is regarded as more important than training in our religious thought. If a country distributes uniforms to people and does not train them in military science, what do you think will happen to this army in times of war when only people with uniforms are sent to the battle front? This is exactly what Muslims are doing everywhere. Uniforms with no training is like “putting the cart before the horse”.

The *sunnah* is an outward manifestation of an inner quality. The inner quality as given in the Holy Qur’ān is *taqwā*. This is the *umm al-faḍā’il*, the cardinal virtues, also called *taqwa-Allāh* – to fear God and to revere Him in His Majesty. The emphasis is to keep God always in mind and be conscious of accountability before God. This is *taqwā*. The word *taqwā* is from *waqā* – to avoid what is wrong. It is primarily an attitude of negation in order to avoid what is wrong which is the first step towards affirmation as in the *kalimah*. It starts with negation of all else “*Lā ilāha* “ – no god; “*illa Allāh*” – but Allāh!

Similarly in *taqwā* it is the negative aspect, *not* to do any evil that is most important. Unless you clean your slate, the writing of the positive actions of your life on the tablet of your heart will not come. It will all be confusion. Imām al-Ghazzālī (ra) (d. 505/1111) and other great thinkers have said : “The *sunnah* starts by imitating the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) out of love for Allāh and love for fellow human beings.” Now, what is the *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) with regard to love for God? Of course, it is so comprehensive that nobody can describe it, but let us take a few examples:

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) used to stand for prayer at one place during the night, while all others were sleeping. His beloved wife, *Umm al-mu’minin* ‘Ā’ishah *ṣiddīqah* (ra) said that he would sometimes stand still for hours until his feet would become swollen and the capillaries in his feet

would burst and blood flowed from his feet. Has anyone of us prayed like this? Is this not regarded as *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)? When he read from the Qur'ān in the prayer, although he would read it silently, a sound used to come from his chest as if it was a big kettle in which something was boiling. So, he would pray and utter whatever he recited with all his heart and total personality. We perform the *ṣalāh* like an exercise, devoid of any spirit and then we consider it to be the *sunnah*.

Our degenerating attitude deforms and deshapes the original practice and spirit of the *sunnah*. A person who rests in the afternoon claims he is following a *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) since he did the same. But remember, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was the most industrious and hardworking person ever born in the history of mankind. He used to work the whole day and worship most of the night, and in order to worship during most of the night he would take about half an hour's rest during the day. We sleep the whole night until the *fajr* prayers and we sleep in the afternoon and then claim to be following the *sunnah*. How can we expect a reward from Allāh Almighty? It is an insult to Islam and to the practice of Holy Prophet (ﷺ).

People also say that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) used to like perfumes, so we put on *eau du cologne* after our baths. *Allāhu Akbar*. We have been told in the *ḥadīth*:

رَأْسُ الْحِكْمَةِ مَخَافَةُ اللَّهِ

The essence of wisdom is fear of Allāh

If you have the fear of accountability before God, you cannot do anything wrong. It is only when we become “*ghāfil*” or absent-minded that we lose sight of the fact that God is watching us and He is going to call us to account on the Day of Judgement. Even here, we are called to account or may see the fruits of our good deeds. This is the starting point of the *sunnah*. Human values are built in your inner self. Truth, justice, beauty, honesty, progressiveness, dynamism, optimism, courage and wisdom are all the inner values. This is the *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).

Once these inner values have been built, then it becomes an obligation of love that a person's inner self becomes an image of the Holy Prophet's (ﷺ) personality. Naturally his outward form will also reflect the outer personality of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). But to try to build the outer is like having a timber wall where the wood is infested with white ants. Painting is only done on the outside and not inside. Subsequently, the wood is being eaten by the white ants and such a structure will not last. If the wood is healthy it will stand even without painting the outside.

If my heart is not "mu'min" it cannot be the repository of the highest human qualities as embodied in the *sunna*h of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). Otherwise, I am more concerned about the external adornment and deceive others and myself. That is not the way to follow Islam. We should start from the heart. Islam came to change the heart. We are told in the Qur'ān about the functions of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ):

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو
عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا
مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

He it is who has sent unto the unlettered people a prophet from among themselves, to convey to them His messages and to purify themselves, and to impart to them the Book and the wisdom—whereas before they were indeed in error.

(Q 62:2)

Look at the order of merit. The first is the communication of the message as it comes from God. The second is reformation and purification (*tazkiyah*) of the entire personality of his followers and only after that was he in a position to impart to them the knowledge of *Al-Kitāb* and wisdom, *Al-hikmah*. Our institutions of theology have nothing to do with *tazkiyah*. They teach theology to anybody and only emphasise the external. It is putting the cart before the horse.

The *sunnah* is actually the transformation of the heart, on the basis of all those human values which reached their perfection in the Holy Prophet (s). The start is from the innerself and has to be built up first; then the external manifestation of those great qualities will automatically come.

The inner dimensions of the *sunnah* is intimately linked with *taṣawwuf* or what is known as *sufism*. Here a misunderstanding can arise in connection with the word *ṣūfī* which is not found in the Qur’ān nor in the *ḥadīth*. The implication of the word *ṣūfī* is Qur’ānic and belongs to the *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (s). A *ṣūfī* is a Muslim whose ideal in life is *ṣafā al-qalb* or purification of the heart. The word *ṣafā* means purification which is the ideal of the *ṣūfī* and that of Islam. The term *ṣūfī* came into existence when the ‘*ulamā*’ became divided into the “literists” (*fuqahā*) and those ‘*ulamā*’ who also cared for the spirit along with the letter of the law. So, those ‘*ulamā*’ became known as *ṣūfīs* and the others remained ‘*ulamā*’. So if by the word *ṣūfī* is meant “a spiritually refined person or a spiritually purified person”, then the Holy Prophet (s) was the greatest personification of purification of all time. The spiritual perfection which was granted to him by Allāh (swt) is greater than what was granted to anybody in the entire creation.

Certain teachings were given to certain *ṣaḥābah* like *Sayyidinā* Abū Bakr and *Sayyidinā* ‘Alī (ra), but here again there is a misunderstanding amongst some people. The Holy Prophet (s) has given the teachings of Islam complete in the Qur’ān. Nothing has been left out. The goal of this spiritual pilgrim is higher than a person who wants to lead a good worldly life only. And the dimensions of his quest is different. That person’s experiences are of a higher level or dimension and are called the transcendental dimension. The dimension of religious experiences of ordinary people who don’t take to that special quest, are at the mundane level. The quest of those who are pilgrims of eternity is the transcendental dimension.

The experiences of the transcendental dimension cannot be explained in human speech which is limited to sensory reality. The transcendental reality is beyond the experience of human language. Therefore, if the Holy Prophet (s) had to speak about those realities to the common

people, they would not have been able to understand them. Those who were in the category of the transcendental dimension, were guided by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). Experience of the transcendental dimension is always communicated from soul to soul and not mouth to mouth. Consequently, it has been communicated through the *silsilah* (chain) of the *sūfīs*.

Another point is that *sufism* today is mostly perverted and rotten because 99% of those who are pretending to be *shaykhs* of *sufism* do not know the ABC of *sufism*. It is a sort-of business or trade carried from father to son. Shrines are built and business and money is made. That is not *sufism*. Sufism is Islam. The Law of Islam has a body and a spirit. *Sufism* must remain within the bounds of the *sharī'ah*. The inner aspect of the *sharī'ah* is emphasised after which a person develops internally and travels in the transcendental dimension.

The goal of Islam is to build up a vibrant, living, dynamic relationship with God which is the start and end point of Islam. Teach the young Muslim male or female not only the principle of decency which is also *sunnah* or the external side, but also that God is the source of all blessing, that the only and greatest benefit lies in establishing a living relationship with God. And that can be done even though he's clean-shaven or wears an English suit. It depends on the attitude of the heart towards God. Once this flame or love for Allāh (swt) is kindled in a person's heart then everything, even the proper external behaviour, will come by itself.

After interaction with other people I have come to this definite conclusion as a humble and spiritual teacher. Whenever I asked a person to start with the external qualities such as growing a beard, I failed to build his personality on Islamic lines. But, when I started with values that person became an excellent Muslim and I can point them out to you. Jalāluddīn Rūmī (ra) (605–672AH/1207–1273AD) says: "The body came into existence because of my soul. I am not from the body."

The essential human personality has been given a temporary vehicle in order to function in this world – this body. So build up the human

personality and you will become reformed automatically. Don't start from outside to within, but the reverse way. The thought comes into your mind and then the act takes place. Not the act in the outside world first with the thought into your mind next. No!

So action comes from within first and then without. Preach love for Allāh (swt) and the Holy Prophet (s) alone, that is the message. Let every young man and woman take this up first. Don't talk about *kurta*, beard, etc. If people do not follow this method or way, you can only remind:

وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَ يَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

Remind the followers what their duties are (Q 51:55).

If others preach their way rationally, do the same. If there are young men who have taken to the external *sunnah*, commend them and then encourage them to start with the inner dimension as the real starting point. There should be no question of a conflict or hatred towards anyone. Even if we see a person not following any principle correctly, our attitude should be that of love, not of hatred or contempt.

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 7

Ṣalāh (Prayer)

Today, when one meets any good Muslim, whether he is an educated or uneducated person, anywhere in the world, and inquires from that person as to what he understands by an Islamic life, you will come to the conclusion that in most cases, or probably all cases, the reply would be: “Islam is five things: *kalimah al-shahādah*, *ṣalāh*, *zakāh*, *ṣawm* and *ḥajj*.” In one sense it is correct, but in another, it is not. It is incorrect to take these five pillars as a complete system of life. They will form a cult for a person who pursues these five purposes ritualistically. I have yet to meet people who know *how* to pray, *how* to fast and *how* to perform the pilgrimage.

The fact is that these five things are the foundations of Islam. The Holy Prophet (ṣ) said:

بُنِيَ الْإِسْلَامُ عَلَى خَمْسٍ

The Islamic way of life has been founded on five things.

Try to think about the following example. If you have a friend who lays the foundations of a house, and after doing so invites all his friends to a tea party in order to congratulate himself on his achievement. What will his friends say about him except that he has gone mad; for he laid the foundation, which is only a means and not an end. The end was to construct the building. So anyone who leads his life without these foundations is not a Muslim. That is absolutely

clear, no matter how good a person he is. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has said that these are the foundations of Islam. Unfortunately most of us spend our whole life in laying the foundation only. That person only built the foundation of Islam and did not build Islam but will be called by God Almighty to give account of his actions. Islam has to be built on these foundations. If, however, we only lay the foundation, we have not done our job. If we lay the foundation, it depends on the engineer we employ. That foundation may be solid or of a very poor quality. Unfortunately, these foundations are laid mostly in ignorance. And because of ignorance these foundations are very weak. So we go from this world to face Allāh (swt) and our beloved Prophet (ﷺ).

It is said in an authentic *ḥadīth*, that when a person dies and is laid in the grave, the angels question him, the first question being: “Who is thy lord?” And the second question is: “What do you say about him?” And every person will see the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and the angels will ask: “What do you say about him?” After the death of a Muslim or non-Muslim the first personality the person will be faced with after the angels is the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).

When we go from this world it should not be in a childish fashion of trifling with the foundations of Islam all the time and thinking that we are fulfilling all the other obligations that ought to be fulfilled by us as Muslims. That would be a great pity. Even those foundations that we lay are in most cases of an absurd variety and are foundations nominally only.

This is so because we do not take the trouble to read the Qur’ān. The ‘*ulamā*’ are present, and unfortunately, I am considered to be one of the ‘*ulamā*’. But may I say that the ‘*ulamā*’ do not really teach the pillars of Islam as they should. They only teach the *ahkām al-fiqh*, that is, the ritualistic or the legal part of it which deals with the structure such as the number of *sunnahs*, *wājibāt* or *farā’id*. I am not saying this is unimportant; but this is not all of it. The methodology of genuine or sincere prayer, for example is not taught. Ghālib said about the ḥājī: “Don’t be deceived by the *iḥrām* that the ḥājī wears, for while he was in the *Ḥarām*, he did not know what the *Ḥarām* was nor what the *Ḥajj* was, for he just put on the dress and performed the rituals.”

So to perform the *şalāh* according to those *fiqh* rules – so many *sunnahs*, so many *nawāfil* – this is all right, for it is given by the Holy Prophet (ṣ). We should pray like the Holy Prophet (ṣ) advised. However, prayer is not merely gymnastics. Prayer is much more, indeed it is communion with Allāh (swt) whereby the ‘*abd*’ (sincere servant) of Allāh (swt) comes into contact with Him. This is not ritual, for ritual never pays. For example, when you feed yourself carelessly and you do not care what you eat or drink or whether the food is healthy. Nor do you watch the quantity and time you should eat and merely go through this ritual of feeding yourself. Soon you will become sick and hospitalised. You sacrificed your spirit for a life of ritual. Ritual is like a dead body. Unless the spirit is there, it has no value. Even the loved one would ask for the dead body to be removed from the face of the earth.

And what would Allāh (swt) say about the dead, spiritless ritual? The Holy Prophet (ṣ) said about the prayer that is said with absentmindedness, that it is thrown at the face of the worshipper! How do we pray, my dear brothers and sisters? Is it just a habit for most of us or just a fear that if we don’t pray, Allāh (swt) will become angry and a calamity might befall us? Probe into yourself. Why do we pray? Inquire from others and you’ll find in the subconscious that there is an idea: “I want the good of this world and I want to avoid the evil right here, and Allāh (swt) alone can protect me from evil and He is the only One who can bestow benefit on me, therefore I should go and pray.”

How many of us, when we make *du‘ā’* after *şalāh*, would – from the bottom of our hearts – genuinely pray for anything else except the good things of this world? How many of us pray to Allāh (swt) as the *şūfīs* preach and teach:

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ مَقْصُودِي وَمُرَادِي
وَإِلَيْكَ اسْتِنَادِي وَرِضَاكَ مُسْلِمِي

O Allāh, Thou art my aim and desire, to Thee I turn for strength
(consolidation); Thine pleasure is my peace and contentment.

But our goal is not to acquire His pleasure; but rather to give us the good of this world right here! I am a worthless creature. Millions of people of different communities are only concerned with their material needs. I am not saying we should not ask Allāh to help us.

I return to the need for prayer and how it should be performed. To understand the purpose and methodology of prayer we must imitate the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) to our capacity. Remember, Almighty Allāh says that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is: *The best model is the Holy Prophet* (Q 33:21), and therefore: *If you love Allāh, then follow me* (Q 3:31). What has been reported about him and what did he teach? He was so exact about his prayers that even when a person came to the mosque to perform the prayers, he said: “Do not run.” Rather lose one *raka‘ah* but come to the mosque with dignity, sobriety, calmness and composure. You are going to participate in a great spiritual act! It is not just a ritual or an outward act. You will have to concentrate with your entire personality. How did the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) pray?

It is said that when he prayed in congregation, his prayers were short, and when he prayed in isolation, his prayers were long. He would sometimes stand still for hours – “until his feet would become swollen.” Do you know that when you stand for long periods your blood circulation will be affected. Although the blood accumulated in the lower part of his body, he would stand still until the capillaries would burst and blood would ooze from his feet.

Umm al-mu‘minīn (Mother of the believers) ‘Ā’ishah *ṣiddīqah* (ra), reported that when the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) prayed, a sound emanated from his chest which sounded like a big boiling pot. It was not just about *sunnah* and *farḍ*, or about the different positions during the *ṣalāh*, then *was-salām* and go! No!

How did his followers pray? I’ll give you an authentic example. *Sayyidinā* ‘Alī (ra) was wounded with a poisoned arrow that had two fangs. When they tried to pull out the arrow, the fangs pulled on the flesh

and it was too painful to remove it. Sayyidinā ‘Alī (ra) was a powerful man physically, with nerves of steel, but even he could not stand the pain. However, the poisoned arrow had to be removed. Sayyidinā ‘Alī (ra) prepared for his *ṣalāh*. He asked that in *sajdah*, the arrow be pulled out, and when it was pulled out he felt nothing in spite of the pain it caused. This is prayer! This was the quality of prayer of Sayyidinā ‘Alī, Sayyidinā Abū Bakr, Sayyidinā ‘Umar, Sayyidinā ‘Uthmān, and all the Companions, may Allāh be pleased with them all!

What did the Prophet (ṣ) teach for all time? He laid down a law for service in the way of Allāh, for Islam views the whole of a Muslim’s life as a life of *‘ibādah*. We don’t have that concept of the Christians and Hindus that only the ritual is *‘ibādah* and all else are worldly things. Anything done for the sake of Allāh (swt), even eating, earning your livelihood and also acquiring knowledge, is considered *‘ibādah*.

Naturally, prayer is classified as the foremost *‘ibādah*. It is *‘ibādah* proper, for it is done with a devotional attitude. What has the Holy Prophet (ṣ) commanded us to do ? He said:

فَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ وَإِنْ لَمْ تُكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ

Worship your Lord as if you are seeing him. If this is not possible for you, the lowest mode of worship is that you are conscious that God is seeing you and you are worshipping Him.

What do we do, my dear brothers and sisters? All the thoughts that we were not even thinking about crowd our minds at the time of prayer. We utter the words of prayer, but our minds are elsewhere. Let me give you an example from my personal experience. There was a *ṣūfī* – not of a high order – near Meerat by the name of Sayyid ‘Abdul Ghānī. I used to visit him to sit in his company. The room that he lived in was part of the mosque complex and his window opened into the courtyard of the mosque. However, this *ṣūfī* would never go to pray in the mosque with the congregation. Now many people and certain *‘ulamā’* decry the *ṣūfīs*, but unfortunately they do not understand the *ṣūfīs*. This man talked about Allāh and quoted from the Holy

Qur'ān and discussed issues of spiritual development, but never performed prayers with the congregation.

Of course, he used to pray, but only in his room. One day he was asked to explain his conduct and he replied: "Do you really want to know why I don't go to the mosque? Wait until the congregation comes for 'aṣr prayers." The worshippers came and stood behind the *imām* and prayer started. The *ṣūfī* took off his cap (fez) and placed it on the inquirer's head, *Allāhu Akbar*, *Allāhu Akbar*. It was an ugly spectacle! The *imām* was in the shape of an animal and so were all the worshippers; some like dogs, some like swines, some like foxes. It was not magic; it was just placing his cap on the inquirer's head and seeing. Allāh (swt) has ordered in the Qur'ān:

وَأَزْكُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ

Bow down with those who bow down.

(Q 2:43)

Are we the *rākī'in*?

The Holy Prophet (ṣ) said:

لَا صَلَاةَ إِلَّا بِحُضُورِ الْقَلْبِ

Prayer is not prayer unless it is said with the fullest concentration of the mind.

Concentration should be on Allāh (swt).

What is this act of prayer? Let us try to think about it in a very simple manner. Allāh (swt) is the Creator, the Ruler, the Governor and Controller of the entire universe and everything here. His Majesty and Grandeur is infinite. We cannot conceive it. He is under no obligation to us. He is in no need of anything that He created. He is, *Al-Ṣamad*; meaning that everything is dependent on Him and He is independent of everything.

So great! Yet with all His Greatness, look at His love for us. He is the King of Kings and out of His love for us He has proclaimed that someone

will call out five times per day.

He calls us to His audience! In our worldly life when we become a prime minister, chairman or a rich Muslim, we wouldn't like an ordinary person to come to us just anytime! Also, we want to have audience with people who are greater in influence than us. We think that would be an honour for us. But here, He who is really Great, before whom nothing is great, He is inviting us Himself, inviting us with Love! And when we offer prayers ritualistically, it is the greatest insult we can give Allāh (swt).

For example, if you are my friend and you come to talk with me with love and I turn my face and answer you with a dry face and tone. Would it not be an insult to your love? You'll refuse to have anything to do with me! "So, Allāh (swt) invites us with love! He does not need us to come and pray to Him, for the angels who are greater in number, are all the time making *taṣbīḥ* and *tahlīl* around the 'Arsh all over the universe. Who are we – insignificant human beings? And remember, the angels do it because that is their food and they can remain alive only through *dhikr-Allāh*. He invites us, for He says: *Remember Me, I'll remember you.* (Fadhkuruni adhkurkum)

Why does He invite us? Because He has made us *khalīfat-Allāh*!

He has made us as His vicegerents and the Holy Prophet (ṣ) has commanded us: "Imbue yourselves with divine qualities."

When the iron filings come into contact with the magnet, they are magnetised. If they don't come into contact with the magnet, they remain iron filings, but when they are magnetised, they don't become the magnet. When the servant ('abd) of Allāh (swt) approaches Him with the same spirit of love, as the Qur'ān says:

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ

The believers are strong in their love for Allāh.

(Q 2:165)

he becomes magnetised. People sometimes raise the question that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said about himself and the other prophets that: “The earth cannot devour the bodies of the prophets.”

Somebody asked me how could it be because the prophets were also mortal. My reply was very simple. In physical science, if you take a piece of iron and bury it in the earth, it will rust, ultimately corrode and finally be dissolved by the earth. However, if you magnetise that piece of iron, the earth cannot destroy it even in a thousand years! This is the way the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has shown to us, the way to immortality! Not mere gymnastic exercise in prayer, where we have been praying for forty years and have performed the *hajj* twenty or fifty times! If one has performed the *hajj* even once properly, very good, but one thousand times improperly, one has wasted one's his money and time.

That is why it is said that one *sajdah* is enough for your salvation. If you can perform one prostration in real devotion as Allāh's 'abd and with full consciousness, you are saved! And a thousand *sajdahs* without care? The Holy Qur'an tells us:

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ
الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ

Cursed are those who pray, who are absent in their prayers. Those who want only to be seen and praised and refuse to assist people.

(Q 107:4-7)

It is only an exhibition that I am a *muṣallī*. I have seen people in Hong Kong and Singapore who call themselves “*namāzī*”. Like *hājī* – why do you call yourself “*hājī*”? Who gave you this title? Then you must also have the title “*namāzī*” so-and-so or “*zakātī*” so-and-so! Beating about the bush and not trying to understand the reality!

Why does Allāh (swt) call us?

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا
الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا

Verily I presented My trust on the heavenly bodies and the earth and the mountain, but they refused to accept that trust. Then man came forward and accepted that trust for he has proved to be ungrateful and ignorant.

(Q 33:72)

This Allāh (swt) is saying again out of affection, as you may say to your son: “How foolish of you, my dear son.” And then He lays down the law. We are the bearers of the *amānah*. We are supreme in God’s creation and that is why He wants to train and develop us. Therefore He sent the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), not for rituals, but to build us into His *khalīfah*!

What is *khalīfah*? The word “*khalīfah*” has three meanings namely:

- “*he who comes after*,” (Q 7:169). But Allāh (swt) is a Being who has no before and no after. He is infinite. Thus human beings are not His *khalīfah* in that sense at all.
- *Khalīfah* can mean “deputy.” Allāh (swt) has no deputy. The Queen of England has a deputy in another country for she cannot administer the affairs there directly, for her powers are finite and limited. Therefore she sends her deputy. As for Allāh: *Allāh encompasses everything* (bi kulli shayin muhit), and: *Verily Allāh has power over all things*.
- Then what does the word *khalīfah* mean? According to the best authorities, it means: “he who can change things.” or “he who can interfere in things.” And this is the function of mankind. Allāh (swt) created this earth but did not create a house, road, nor furniture. He placed the responsibility on us as the *khalīfah*. And the progeny of Adam progressed step by step, discovered the laws. And step by step, He sent His Prophets who taught the way of life, of culture and civilisation, medicine, and any other branch of life.

Read the Qur’ān and you’ll find, for example, about Sayyidinā Dāwūd (as):

وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ صَنْعَةَ لَبُوسٍ لَّكُمْ لِنُحْصِنَكُمْ مِّنْ بَأْسِكُمْ

We taught him how to change the iron ore into steel and use it to make armour.

(Q 21:80)

His function was not merely to give spiritual and moral teachings. From this we understand that the function of the Prophet (ﷺ) was not only to teach the spiritual and moral principles, but also to teach the ways of culture and civilisation, and even technology. And in this manner humanity, the “*khalīfat-Allāh fil-arḍ*,” progressed.

When it progressed, it had been carrying out *taṣarruf* – i.e. converting things into different things. Allāh (swt) created the matter from which the microphone is made, He created the brain and mind in the human being. Ultimately, He is the Creator of everything, but His *khalīfah* does the job of creating the microphone. Allāh’s (swt) angels grow the trees, but they don’t make the furniture. It has been laid as the obligation on the human being who should make the microphone, motor car, roads, buildings, using his reason. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said that it is the best asset that Allāh (swt) has given to the human being. The *khalīfah* imitates one of the attributes of Allāh (swt) of *Al-Muṣawwir* – “The Fashioner”, for he becomes the fashioner. But Allāh (swt) has created things *ab novo* – out of nothing – and therefore: *the best of creators* (Q 23:14). Here He refers to the human inventors who are His *khalīfah*, for there are no other creators of the universe.

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has laid down a law for us that our destiny is to become “imbued with divine attributes” – and for this we need to be magnetised. And how can we become magnetised? Unless the iron filings are within the range of the magnetic field, they will not be magnetised. That range has got to be acquired by us, therefore Allāh (swt) invites us to: *prostrate and come near to Me* (Q 96:19).

Attain nearness to Me in order that you may become magnetised. The more a person remains away from Allāh (swt) the less is the chance of him becoming magnetised. It is not that Allāh Almighty is remote, for he says:

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ

I am nearer to you than your jugular vein.

(Q 50:16)

But in spite of this, that nearness has to be acquired, that range has to be acquired before we can become magnetised. This is *ṣalāh*, and that is why the Holy Prophet (ṣ) said that: “Prayer is not prayer unless it is done with the fullest concentration of the personality.”

And that is why he said that when you begin the prayer, raise the hands. Do you know what it means? These fingers of the hand are the writing of Allāh. The *alif*, *lām*, and the *hamza* are all here on the hand. There is no other word for God in any language which can be fashioned in the hands of the human being except – Allāh. Also in the hands of human there are lines. On the palm of the right hand, we have 18 and on the left hand we have 81. Now $18 + 81 = 99$ – the Names of Allāh (swt).

Therefore, when I go for prayer, I raise these hands and for the sake of Allāh to the east and to the west and with these ninety nine names I withdraw myself from this world! It is not the careless way we are performing prayer by rushing in and out. You should pause for minutes before adopting this attitude and think what you are doing. That is why it has been said that the person who does not pray with full serenity and calmness, is not praying. At every step you should be conscious of what you are doing. Every act must be with consciousness.

When you fold the hands, it is the demonstration and symbol of humility: “O Allāh, I am your obedient servant”. But when you fold the hands and you are thinking of football or rugby or anything else, it is not prayer. The attitude of obedience to Allāh (swt) has to be developed with full humility in posture. Then you increase this posture

of humility by going into the *rukū'* and proclaiming: "Allāh alone is great". I am nothing! Unless you become the empty beggar's bowl, the blessings of Allāh (swt) will not come to you. Make the *rukū'* as humble as possible and don't read like a parrot. This humility has to be brought to climax – "I am a beggar, O Lord, I am nothing, and I have emptied myself of all vanity and all thought about myself, Thou alone art the Real Being." and for that you go into prostration and say: "Glorious art Thou, the High". Here we use the word – "The High", for we have become the "low."

That spirit has to be acquired and *wallāhi*; *billāhi*; *tallāhi*, "experience it!" If you can prostrate like this before Allāh (swt) in this physical world, you will experience it. I am swearing to you by the oath that it really is! Experience it, for the Qur'ān says: *Come near to Me in prostration* (Q 96:19). But if the *sajdah* is performed like a ritual, then nothing is obtained. It is like a blind person who just roams about and never reaches his destination.

There's another very important point about prayer which causes confusion amongst Muslims, when actually there should be none. Allāh (swt) is Almighty, His knowledge encompasses everything; the past, present and future. He knows whatever passes in the human mind – even feelings. He is All-Powerful, but what is His law? He has appointed His angels, millions of them, to be the functionaries of His Divine Order. This does not mean that He is not Powerful. It is not against the Almightyness and of being All-Knowing that He has appointed the angels, but it is His mode of administration. He knows in His Wisdom what we, insignificant human beings with a few ounces of brains cannot know.

Now let us look at the structure of prayer. Every gift presented to a friend or superior is done in a very neat and beautiful fashion, ie. placed in a container and beautifully wrapped. The prayer that you present to Allāh (swt) is a gift that you are presenting Him, so it should not just disappear into thin air. It should go in a casket. When you read *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, you will start as follows:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

*All praise and thanks is for Allāh, the Merciful, the Giver of Mercy.
Master of the Day of Judgment.*

(Q 1:2-3)

This is the praise of the Master.

Then you present your beggar's bowl:

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

O Lord, we worship Thee alone and Thine Help we seek.

(Q 1:4)

Then we are demanding the greatest gift from Allāh (swt):

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

Guide us on the straight path.

(Q 1:5)

A person may have power, beauty or an army of supporters, but unless he is rightly guided, he cannot obtain blessing from it. The basic blessing is the *hidāyah* – he should be rightly guided and Islam teaches the fundamental thing.

Remember, all the prayers are always in the plural form. If one goes selfishly towards Allāh, He is not going to give one anything. “*Ihḍinā*” – *guide us all*. So before going to prayer, one should say seven times: *A‘ūdhu billāhi minash-shayṭānir-rajīm wa a‘ūdhu billāhi minash-shurūrī nafsī wa min sayyi’ātī a‘mālinā*, and all the jealousies, all the hatred, selfishness and all the intrigues one should leave outside the *masjid*. Otherwise one has no right to come and stand there.

Then we come to a critical point:

أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

Guide us on the straight path.

(Q 1:6)

Islam is incomplete without the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). Up to this time the worshipper has to concentrate mostly on Allāh. Now the worshipper has to concentrate on Allāh (swt) and on the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), for he says:

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

The path of those whom Thou has blessed.

(Q 1:7)

Who has been blessed more than the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)? Therefore you have to concentrate on this. This is the beginning of prayer, but what about the end? When you are about to say the *salām*, Allāh (swt) says you are not welcome if you don't take the help of His Beloved Prophet (ﷺ). Therefore in the *taḥiyyāt* you say: *at-taḥiyyātul-mubārakātut-tayibātu lillāhī*, praising Allāh (swt).

Then you turn to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) saying: *as-salāmu 'alayka ayyuhan-nabiyyu wa raḥmatul-lāhi* and the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) returns the greeting with *wa 'alaykas-salām*.

And when the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) returns the greeting, then Allāh (swt) accepts. Here this prayer has come through the proper channel, with the blessings of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). Then in gratefulness, we say: *as-salāmu 'alaynā wa 'alā 'ibādil-lāhiṣ-ṣāliḥīn. Ash-hadu al-lā ilāha illal-lāh wa ash-hadu anna muḥammadan 'abduhū wa rasūluh*.

You have affirmed here that Allāh (swt) gave such an eminent position to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), therefore he is the gateway to get His blessing. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is His *'abd* and His *essenger*, not a god. This has to be affirmed in order to maintain the balance of mind. So you have been asked to say: *"I bear witness that Muḥammad is the slave and*

messenger of Almighty Allāh.”

Then again in gratefulness to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and to the whole range of prophets, starting with the “*millata Ibrāhīm*” through whom the guidance came to us, you say: *allāhumma ṣalli ‘alā muḥammad wa ‘alā āli muḥammad kamā ṣallayta ‘alā ibrāhīma wa ‘alā āli ibrāhīma wa bārik ‘alā muḥammadin wa ‘alā āli muḥammadin kamā bārakta ‘alā ibrāhīma wa ‘alā āli ibrāhīma fīl-‘ālamīna innaka ḥamīdum-majīd.*

Finally, you say a prayer for yourself: *allāhumma innī ḥalamtu nafsī ḥulman kathīran wa la yaḡfirudh-dhunūban illā anta faḡfirli maghfiratam-min ‘indaka war-ḥamnī innaka antal-ḡhafūrur-raḥīm.*

Now the prayer will be accepted.

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 8

Sūrah al-Fātiḥah and the Concept of Khalifat-Allāh

Sūrah Fātiḥah contains several verses and is recited in each *ṣalāh*. The Qur'ān opens with this *sūrah*. It is the quintessence of the Qur'ān. If one understands this *sūrah*, one understands much of the Qur'ān.

Almighty Allāh says in the Holy Qur'ān:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ

Say, if you love Allāh, then follow me, and Allāh will make you His beloved.

(Q 3:31)

Fix your gaze, your attention, your heart, emotions and feelings on imitating me. The result would be that Allāh (swt) will love you.

The verse speaks of love by a Muslim for Allāh (swt) and it speaks of love by Allāh (swt) for a Muslim. What does it mean? It means that if we believe in the one true God, Allāh (swt), we can form contact with Him. We don't believe in something from which we cannot obtain blessings or reward. Neither do we believe in something that is just a distant force or power which has no concern for us. Or if it has a concern, it is only that of a ruler for its subjects – No!

Allāh (swt) is the Ruler, The Creator, The Fashioner, The Guide. He controls everything in the entire universe. So Great, Majestic and Infinite and very different from us is He, yet, He loves us. He loves us because He created us. For example, if an artist makes a piece of art with full devotion and love he would not allow any damage to be done to his piece of art. Likewise, if we make or possess something, we cultivate a love for it because we put our energy, hearts and souls into it. Therefore, there is a love for that thing, conscious or subconscious.

How can we at all imagine that when Allāh (swt) created us and fashioned us in the best mould as He says in the Holy Qur'ān:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ

Verily, I have created man in the best form, with the best constitution.

(Q 95:4)

but have no love and concern for us? When Allāh has made the human being as such, He should love that which He created, and verily He does love it. Allāh's relationship with human beings is that of Mercy and Love. In the opening of the Qur'ān, in the very first verse, Allāh (swt) introduces Himself with the Attributes of love: *Al-Rahmān al-Rahīm*. The first verse says:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

... the Most Beneficent, Most Merciful.

In the second verse He says:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Praise is due to God alone, Sustainer of all the worlds.

Here again we have the attribute of love for the word *Rabb* means Cherisher, Sustainer, Maintainer, Protector, Evolver and Guide to The Goal. These are the functions of the *Rabb*.

Then He repeats in the third verse that He is:

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

The Beneficient, The Merciful.

In the fourth verse He says:

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

Master of the Day of Judgement

He is going to take account of our actions.

Then He invites us to receive His blessings and He comforts us: "Don't think of Me like some of the human beings that became great and with whom contact becomes impossible. Despite the fact that I am Infinitely Great and that I am your Lord and your God, I love that you come to Me." And the inviter invites everyday from every *masjid*: "Come to *ṣalāh*, Come to success!"

The *mu'adhdhin* invites on behalf of Allāh (swt), that we approach Him and request everything that is good. Thus, we are taught in *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, the fifth verse:

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

We worship Thee alone and We seek Thine help.

We affirm here our loyalty to Allāh (swt) that we are not rebellious. We believe in Him and affirm it with this verse. Then we request God's help. Help in what? The Holy Prophet (ṣ) taught us that a Muslim should pray to Allāh (swt) for the most ordinary things in life. But here, Allāh (swt) is teaching us to ask the highest desire from Him while the lowest is left to our selection. That highest desire is, verse six:

أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

Guide us unto the Straight Path.

Guide us unto the path of glory, success, wisdom, and beauty. Remember “*ihdīnā*,” “guide us”, does not only mean pointing out the way but also to guide us on that Path to enable us to reach *the goal*. The goal has been mentioned in *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*. In verse seven we are told:

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

The path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thine blessings.

Who are the blessed people? In the Qur’ān we are told:

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ

Whoever obeys Allāh and his Beloved Prophet becomes the companion of one of those on whom Allāh’s blessings have come.

(Q 4:69)

They are the ‘*Anbiyā*’, the Prophets and below this rank is the *Ṣiddiqīn* – those who were the personification of truth in thought, word and deed. They were not message-bearers, but personified the divine truth in their personalities to the extent that no shortcomings could be found. The third category is the *Shuhadā*’ – those who sacrificed themselves for the sake of truth out of love for Allāh. The fourth category is the *Ṣāliḥīn* – those who led healthy lives in accordance with the divine code of life.

Islam did not come to have followers who are Muslims only in name, or ritualistically, or from the point of view of certain *aqā’id* (principles of belief) which they may hold but not practice. Islam came to transform human beings in order for them to become worthy of companionship of any of those four categories.

A man is known by the company he keeps. Therefore in order to be

in the company of one of the four categories one has to be a true servant of Allāh Almighty. Some people interpret this verse to mean that a person can also become a *nabīy* (prophet). They are misguided and want to mislead people. *Nubuwwat* (Prophethood) has ended and the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was the last and final Divine Messenger from God. A person cannot become a *nabīy* as a result of his *mujāhadāt* (spiritual labours) as it is a gift from God.

But the companionship means: if a piece of iron stays in the company of a magnet, it becomes magnetised. It acquires new properties (qualities). Similarly, if a gardener stays in the company of fragrant flowers, he himself attains fragrance by being in touch with the flowers. What we have been asked by Almighty Allāh is to pray.

Did Islam come only to place upon us an obligation of praying without understanding, or doing some rituals and finding no change within ourselves after we have prayed? Did Islam come to impose upon us the hardship of fasting during the month of *Ramaḍān* just because, (God forbid!) He takes pleasure in putting us to hardship? He said clearly in the Holy Qur’ān:

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ
عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ مَثَلًا لِّأَبِيكُمْ إِبرَاهِيمَ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ
المُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ
وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ

Allāh sent Islam so that its followers can become bearers of witness to the existence of God and to the existence of that spiritual order that is there in the world.

In the code of guidance that Allāh has sent, He did not intend hardship as the goal. It is the creed of your forefather Abraham. It is He who has named you ‘muslims’ so that the Messenger might bear witness to the truth before you, and that you might bear witness to it before all mankind.

(Q 22:78)

The words *shahīd*, *shuhūd*, *mash-hūd*, and *mushāhadah*, are all from the same root (*sh-h-d*). A person cannot be a *shahīd* (witness) unless he has observed a certain thing. Who then will be recognised as a witness by mankind of the truth of Islam except he who can claim to have seen the working of His attributes though he has not seen the personality of God! Such a person is a *shahīd* of what Allāh Almighty does. Unless a person has reached this stage he has not fulfilled a condition for which Islam came.

Our function is not merely to pray and fast only as a mere ritual. Of course, we have to do it in order to become witnesses, to have personal and direct experience of Allāh Almighty. That is why we have become the *ummah* of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).

Let us take an example from history: There was a great saint, Sayyidinā Junayd (ra) (297/910) of Baghdad. One day he was walking past the mosque when he heard the *adhān* (call to prayer) and when the *mu'adhdhin* said: *Ash-hadu an-lā ilāha illal-lāh*, the saint grabbed the *mu'adhdhin* by the collar and said: "You are a liar." The *mu'adhdhin* trembled for he knew that Sayyidinā Junayd was an 'ālim and a saintly person. The saint inquired whether he has seen God? How can you say "Ash-hadu, – I bear witness", for bearing of witness is based on *mushāhadah* – personal observation. And if you have not observed God, what right have you to say: 'Ash-hadu'." The saint approached him while being a state of spiritual (ecstasy). A wise man who saw the happening told the *mu'adhdhin* to reply: "I am announcing this on authority of him who has seen God, Muḥammad Rasūlullah. Therefore I am not a liar." Recall the verse from the Holy Qur'ān:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ

If you love Allāh, imitate me, follow me and Allāh will make you
His beloved.

(Q 3:31)

All these categories are the categories of the beloved, that is *anbiyā'*, *ṣiddiqīn*, *shuhadā'* and the *ṣāliḥīn*.

What changes come in the human being when he or she becomes one of those whom Allāh (swt) loves? In a *ḥadīth qudsī* we are told by Allāh (swt):

وَلَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ
 حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ، فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ
 الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ
 وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِسُ بِهَا وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي
 يَمْشِي بِهَا، وَلَئِنْ سَأَلَنِي لَأُعْطِيَنَّهُ

When my servant loves me and proceeds towards me with the intensity of love by leading a righteous, godly and pious life and beyond what I have prescribed as obligatory, then he arrives at the stage where I come to love him. When I make him my beloved, I become his ears with which he hears (hearing), his eyes with which he sees (sight), his hands with which he grabs. I become his feet with which he walks his tongue with which he speaks,

and Bayhāqi added:

I become his mind with which he thinks.

Allāh (swt) is Unique and Infinite and Indivisible. He does not incarnate into any being, but we know, if Allāh (swt) becomes anybody's eyes, we can understand that from such sight nothing would remain hidden. As for Allāh becoming the "ears" – no sound would remain hidden from such a person and when Allāh (swt) becomes your "feet" – there would be no place in the universe where those "feet" cannot go. If that "tongue" says that such and such a thing is going to happen, it is bound to happen.

This is the goal of Islam, which has been set out for us. Don't think there is any vestiges of *shirk* – for the human remains human and God remains God. Nothing is detracted from the personality of God. Here is an illustration. The convex lens has neither light nor heat and is a dead, dark thing. Focus the convex lens before the sun, and a small sun will appear on the palm of your hand, and burn your hand. This small sun that is created is the image of the real sun, dazzlingly bright in its form and function, but in its nature is not. It is only an image that has been built up on the surface of your hand. This small sun has light and heat but is not self-existent. It remains at the will of the real sun. As long as the real sun remains and feeds the convex lens, the created sun will remain. If the convex lens is removed, the created sun will disappear.

This convex lens is like our spiritual heart. Through the love of Allāh, the convex lens's focus and projection is increased through the *dhikr* of *lā ilāha illal-lāh*. It gradually acquires radiation from Allāh (swt) and absorbs it. As it has been said by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ):

قَلْبُ الْمُؤْمِنِ عَرْشُ اللَّهِ

The heart of the believer is the Throne of God.

It is the throne of God and should be actively made the throne of God. This is the goal of Islam. When these qualities are gradually absorbed through the process Allāh (swt) has taught to: *Establish the ṣalāh to remember Me* (Q 20:14); and, *Remember Me, I remember you* (Q 2:102).

Love is mutual, reciprocal, interdependent and it is out of Allāh's intense love for us that He said to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) to teach us: Tell my servants, – if they walk one step towards Me, I will move ten steps towards them.

This is Real Love and He does love us. Of course, most of us are unworthy of His love. We don't know how to love Him and we don't want to love Him. That is our greatest loss, for we cannot do any harm to Him nor take anything from His glory nor add anything to

His glory. He is *Al-Şamad*. He is Absolute and Independent of everything.

That is why the path that has been prescribed by the Holy Prophet (ş) is:

تَخَلَّقُوا بِأَخْلَاقِ اللَّهِ

Imbue yourself with the divine attributes and divine qualities.

This is not *shirk* but real *tawhīd* and requires proper understanding. This is the function of *khalīfat-Allāh* just like the convex lens is the *khalīfah* of the sun!

When man becomes *khalīfat-Allāh* he realises his potential status. In botany, every seed contains the plant that grows out of it, potentially. Similarly, every human being is *khalīfat-Allāh* potentially. He or she has to develop himself or herself in accordance with that code of Islamic guidance to become *khalīfat-Allāh*.

Islam is a treasure house of the blessings of Allāh (swt). We can benefit from this inexhaustible treasure house only if we follow the model of our beloved Prophet (ş), love him intensely and to become like him in his nature – actually. A Muslim in the real sense of the word is to become Muḥammad *rasūlullāh* in nature. What else then? Allāh (swt) says in the Holy Qur’ān:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

Verily the best model is the Holy Prophet.

(Q 33:21)

A model is that which is imitated, with the spirit to become like that model. When a model is given to the factory for mass production to be reproduced and if that is not adhered to, then the factory has not done its job. The Holy Prophet (ş) is the model and the Muslim should try his or her best to change according to that model.

What were the qualities that Allāh (swt) placed in that *model*? He could order the sun to stop; the moon to split into two or he could order space to give way in order to reach his Lord. Our Beloved Prophet (ṣ) was the most perfect *khalīfat-Allāh* and was the embodiment of what the Qur’ān says:

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِّنْهُ

Allāh has made subservient to you whatever is in the heavens and the earth.

(Q 45:13)

He was the personification of this mastery and therefore *khalīfat-Allāh* “par excellence” and the perfect model for anybody who wants to become *khalīfat-Allāh*.

But, we Muslims have become like a small worm that crawls in underground channels and we think we are doing good by leading this life of ignorance and heedlessness. Remember, the duty is not to God or the Holy Prophet (ṣ), but towards ourselves.

This is what Islam has come to teach and what our forefathers believed and practised. When we hear about our forefathers like Sayyid ‘Abdul Qādir Jilānī (ra), then we are amazed.

It is reported that the ruler of Baghdad came to Sayyid ‘Abdul Qādir and brought with him two bags of gold sovereigns. He placed the bags before Sayyidinā, who asked the ruler what the contents were. The ruler replied that it was a humble gift from a temporal king to the spiritual king. Sayyidinā replied: “If you believe that I am a spiritual king, then you should pay homage in a spiritual manner and not in this material way”. The king, however, insisted that *Shaykh* ‘Abdul Qādir should accept his gift and Sayyidinā knew that this king was ignorant of the reality. Sayyidinā took the two bags, one in each hand and pressed them, and behold – blood was flowing from those bags. The king trembled and Sayyidinā said to him: “How unmindful of Allāh and the Day of Judgement you are; that you suck the blood out of your subjects and you bring that blood to one whom you think is

the servant of Him!” The king trembled and fainted. When he came to his senses, he said: “I will function under your command!” This is *khalīfat-Allāh*!

Sayyidinā Mu‘īnuddīn Chisti (ra) was commanded by the Holy Prophet (ṣ) to propagate Islam in India, the land of the Hindus. The Hindu ruler searched for his greatest Hindu yogi in order to have a spiritual duel with *Sayyidinā* upon his arrival in Ajmer. This yogi (Garam – Pal), then challenged *Sayyidinā* and said: “I can fly in the air, let us see who can fly the furthest.” The yogi then flew in the air and *Sayyidinā* commanded his wooden sandal to fly after him, hit him on the head and to bring him down. It actually happened!

We may think that these are stories of the past. If these facts of history are fiction then all history is fiction. Let me tell you about *Mawlana* ‘Abd al-‘Alīm Ṣiddīqī (ra). I was with him on our world tour during 1950 and we visited the capital of the Philippines, Qutabatu. A function was to be held on an open square scheduled to begin after *Maghrib*. After *Dhuhr*, dark clouds appeared and by ‘Aṣr, conditions worsened with signs of a big storm. After ‘Aṣr, I mentioned to my teacher about the dark clouds and the rolling thunder and the pending storm, and he replied: “My dear son, why are you worried? We have come here to deliver the message of God – the rain is sent by God, the earth belongs to God and the human beings are creatures of God, and if He wants me to deliver the message it will be done.”

After *Maghrib* we went to the open plain, where a huge crowd was waiting. The governor was the chairman and the chief justice (a Roman Catholic) was also there. His Eminence, *Mawlana*, just began to deliver his talk when huge drops of rain started to fall. The huge crowd started to get up in order to flee to their homes, when *Mawlana* ‘Abd al-‘Alīm Ṣiddīqī said: “My dear friends, don’t be worried, the rain is going to stop right now.” – and the rain stopped. *Mawlana* ‘Abd al-‘Alīm Ṣiddīqī reassured them that “It will not rain for as long as this function is on.” However, after the function is over you will have ten minutes to get to your homes, and then a very big storm will come.”

Not one drop of rain fell after the announcement and *Mawlana* delivered one of his finest lectures – in an utmost carefree manner and spoke for about one and half hours. The rumbling and thunder was there all the time. Then the chairman gave the vote of thanks. When the function was over, the people rushed to the platform in order to shake hands with *Mawlana*, who again said: “ My dear friends, you were running away from here earlier and don’t you see what is happening in the sky? Please, for God’s sake, you have ten minutes to get to your homes and I am going to my hotel.”

Exactly ten minutes later the storm came and the following morning, the water in the roads was about two metres high. Thousands of those who were Catholics, became Muslim. This happened in 1950! This is *khalīfat-Allāh and this is Islam!*

The goal of Islam is not to grope in the dark. The function of Islam is as we are told in the Qur’ān:

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ

Allāh is the friend of those who believe in Him genuinely, and He takes them out of the darkness into the light.

(Q 2:257)

where they can see every reality.

The last great thinker of Islam, Shāh Waliyullāh, says that Sayyid ‘Abdul Qādir (ra) (470–561/1077–1166) still interferes in the activities of this world as if he were alive. If the goal is to imbue ourselves with divine attributes – to be *khalīfat-Allāh* – then the natural function is interference.

A physical scientist also interferes. When he makes an aeroplane, rocket or microphone, he invents something that was not there before. Of course, this invention takes place on the basis of the qualities that Allāh (swt) placed in those materials and the mind He has created. But this *khalīfat-Allāh* performs the function as a *khālīq* – as a creator. The Qur’ān says:

فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

Blessed is Allāh, the Best of Creators.

(Q 23:14)

but only One Creator creates *ab novo* – originated everything out of nothing. The function of a human being is to be a creator in the secondary form.

The work of humans as *khalīfat-Allāh*, is to build roads, buildings and bridges. Thus the work is not possible without interference, that is, to change the function and shape of a thing which is called *tasarruf*. This interference is possible on the lower level of physical science and at the higher level, that is, spirituality. Those who acquire characteristics of *khalīfat-Allāh*, as spiritual beings or moral beings and servants of Allāh (swt), become mirrors wherein His attributes are reflected. They can do greater wonders than the physical scientist.

‘Allāmah Iqbāl (ra) (1290–1357/1873–1938) said: “If a person is a *mu’min* in the real sense of the word, he is no more an image but the reflector of His attributes”. In the battle of Badr, when the *kuffār* were more powerful, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) picked up dust and threw it at them. The battle was fought with this and as the Qur’ān says:

وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ

Although that dust was thrown at the army by the hand of the Holy Prophet, actually it was thrown by Me.

(Q 8:17)

because the Prophet (ﷺ) was Allāh’s (swt) *khalīfah*.

My friends, whatever has been said, try it and test it. Don’t waste your lives and time in vain pursuit, and postpone till tomorrow. Resolve right now to attain that glory which Islam came to confer!

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 9

Mi‘rāj

As Muslims have been through a period of decline, their faith in and knowledge of Islam have also declined. The impact of the modern materialistic thought of the Western World has led some Muslims to reject important events of Islamic history, which have a spiritual bearing.

There are scholars who teach and preach that the *mi‘rāj* of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was only a dream. However, the belief of the entire Muslim world is that the *mi‘rāj* took place with his total personality and that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) went to the farthest regions of the cosmos up to a point where no creature has ever been before. This materialist theory that the *mi‘rāj* was only a dream comes from those who do not understand the nature of this world, nor the human constitution. The materialists do not understand the laws under which this world functions, therefore, they try to interpret everything in material terms and in accordance with their defective knowledge. Some of them conceive the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) as a human being “like” them. For them the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is nothing better than a divine postman. They say that the function of the postman is only to deliver the mail or message, nothing more. On this analogy they proclaim that we have nothing to do with the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) anymore, as the postman only delivers the message.

What does the Qur’ān say about this? The fact is that Islam is from Almighty Allāh and our beloved Prophet (ﷺ) transmitted it to his

followers. However, it requires a special type of understanding to see to what extent and in what manner these teachings are correct.

When it is said by some Muslims that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is “like” us with reference to the Qur’ānic *āyah*:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ

Say, I am a human being as you are human beings.

(Q18:110)

then two translations are possible. One leads to *kufṛ* and the other to *īmān*. If “*mithlukum*” is translated as “like you” then it leads a person to *kufṛ*. Like whom? The drunkard, like the murderer, the person who is evil personified?

The Prophet (ﷺ) has been endowed with numerous miraculous qualities, and this verse was revealed to prevent us from falling into error of proclaiming him as a god, since Jesus (as) is confused by others to be God. For example, charcoal is pure carbon and diamond is pure carbon, but there is a world of difference between the two. There is difference in characteristics, worth and function. Certainly the Prophet (ﷺ) is human and we are human but he is like diamond and we are like charcoal.

The event of *mi‘rāj* cannot be understood unless the personality of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and the nature of this universe is understood properly. We do not even have a proper idea of what a human being essentially is. We feel that a human being is essentially flesh and bones! Islam does not say this!

The Qur’ān declares that the essential human being is a spaceless and timeless being who was created in the transcendental world, *Al-Jannah*, which is itself spaceless and timeless. The human essence is not material, but spiritual.

Let us ask the scientists what matter essentially is. The experiment of physical analysis is on the basis of heat; increasing the temperature and

breaking the material to its finer constituents. We have for example, (H₂O) water which exists at three levels: H₂O as water: H₂O as vapour and H₂O as ice. In physical analysis we have the procedure where the material, (e.g. metal) is placed in a hermetically sealed apparatus and subjected to heat. When it is heated the solid becomes a liquid, the liquid turns into vapour, the vapour to flame. The flame bursts into molecules, the molecules into atoms, then to intermediate weight particles, and then into vibrations of light and finally what is called anti-matter. Now by withdrawing the heat we can reverse the process and anti-matter can be transformed to matter.

What is the definition of anti-matter? Anti-matter is the opposite of matter that is, it has no weight; no mass; no density; no dimensions; no colour; no specific gravity, etc. Thus, anti-matter is the opposite of matter and cannot be conceived as existing in space and time.

Einstein was asked: "How did this world or universe come into existence?" He answered: "The entire universe must have begun as a point of light in intense motion and that point of light projected itself in the tape of extension and became space and the intense motion of that point of light projected itself on the tape of duration and became time". The concept of evolution was given for the first time in the Holy Qur'an.

According to a *ḥadīth* related by Jābir 'Abdullāh Anṣārī (ra) the Holy Prophet (ṣ) said:

أَوَّلُ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ نُورِي

The first thing Allāh created was my light, the Nūr al-Muḥammadī.

The Holy Qur'an confirms:

وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

I am the first among Muslims.

(Q 6:163)

In another verse we are told:

وَلَهُ أَسْلَمَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

Everything in the heavens and the earth is Muslim.

(Q 3:83)

that is, it submits to the Divine Will. Therefore the first thing created was the *nūr* of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).

The personality of our beloved Prophet (ﷺ) is the most marvellous in creation. It is only through his human emergence in history that we have come to know him. But the real Muḥammad (ﷺ) is a cosmic personality. It is the foundation of the entire universe. In another *ḥadīth* we are told:

أَنَا مِنْ نُورِ اللَّهِ وَالْخَلْقُ كُلُّهُمْ مِنْ نُورِي

I am from the light of Allāh and the entire creation is from my light.

This is exactly what Einstein has said.

Try to imagine and understand this on the basis of the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*. The Holy Qur'ān says:

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

Allāh is the light of the heavens and the earth.

(Q 24:35)

and the *ḥadīth* :

كَانَ اللَّهُ وَلَمْ شَيْئًا قَبْلَهُ

There was a time when Allāh alone existed.

Now, Allāh is “Light” therefore the “non-existent” is darkness. Remember, “Light” is not as we know it. The method of creation by Allāh (swt) is unlike our method. The Holy Qur’ān says:

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

Everything comes into being through Allāh’s will. He says ‘Be’ and ‘it is’.

(Q 36:82)

What would have happened when the universe was created? On the level of human reason, Allāh is “Light”, therefore His Will is also “Light”. When His “Light” was cast on the firmament of “darkness” a point of Light was created. That point of light was the *Nūr al-Muḥammadī*, thus Allāh (swt) said:

كُنْ مُحَمَّدًا!

Come into existence Muḥammad!

and the process of evolution took its course.

When this *Nūr al-Muḥammadī* came into being, what do you think should be the status of the Holy Prophet (ṣ); when the Holy Qur’ān says:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

O Beloved Prophet, I have not sent thee but as a mercy unto all the worlds.

(Q 21:107)

Now, who else can be a mercy unto all the worlds than he from whose light all the worlds has been created. And when we were taught that the Holy Prophet (ṣ) is the “*waṣīlah*” (medium) between man and God. How can it be otherwise? What else links this world with Allāh (swt), except His first creation which is the light of Muḥammad (ṣ). Allāh (swt) is Almighty and does not need any “*waṣīlah*” for Himself but He has made the universe and is then for human beings to realise

Him. For His realisation Allāh (swt) kept himself hidden but He has made the “*waṣīlah*” to know him. How can a human being know Allāh (swt)?

If this room should be illuminated with lamps of one thousand watts each, everybody will go mad. The intense light rays will penetrate the brain. Imagine the Majesty of Allāh, the Infinite Majesty and Grandeur, the Infinite intensity of His “Light” when He says :

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

Allāh is the light of the heavens and the earth.

(Q 24:35)

Who in this universe can withstand it? None but the heart of the Holy Prophet (ṣ). For example, electricity is generated at a very high voltage and transformers are used to bring the voltage down for use in offices and our homes. If the high voltage should be applied to the wiring in our homes all our installations will burn out or will be destroyed.

Everything in this world is constantly in need of the “Light” of Allāh (swt). Nothing in this world can survive without that radiation of Divine Light flowing into it. Unless the proper connection between this universe and Allāh (swt) remains, this universe will vanish. Just as we use transformers to step the voltage down, Almighty Allāh created the “First transformer”, the “heart” of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) to link this world to Allāh (swt). The Holy Prophet (ṣ) is also the medium or *waṣīlah* for forgiveness and repentance.

According to the verse:

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ
جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ
لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا

If those sinners come to you O Prophet and seek forgiveness of Allāh, and if the Holy Prophet also seeks forgiveness for them, they will find Allāh as the acceptor of repentance and bestower of mercy.

(Q 4:64)

Furthermore, there is a *ḥadīth* from *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim* that corroborates this fact. A companion who was blind since birth came to the Holy Prophet (ṣ) and said that as a Muslim he knew he should be content with his condition but felt that if the Holy Prophet (ṣ) should pray for him then Allāh would grant his sight. Our Prophet (ṣ) asked him to perform ablution and to read two *raka'ah* *nafl ṣalāh* and in the prostration recite “O Lord I ask Thee through the *waṣīlah* of Thy Prophet to grant my eye sight”. The companion could see after this.

This status of *waṣīlah* was given to our Prophet (ṣ) because he is the proper channel if anyone wishes to come to Allāh (swt). Therefore, unless we understand the personality of the Holy Prophet (ṣ), the problem of the *mi'rāj* would remain inconceivable and dogmatic or we will doubt that the event occurred.

Let us focus on another point. Remember, at the dawn of creation, according to the Holy Qur'ān Almighty Allāh assembled all the Prophets and made a covenant with them:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَآءَآتِيكُمْ مِّنْ كِتَابٍ
وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ
بِهِ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ قَالَ أَأَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَخَذْتُمْ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُمْ إِصْرِي
قَالُوا أَأَقْرَرْنَا قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوا وَأَنَا مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

When I send to you the book and wisdom and after your mission then will come a particular Messenger of mine, testifying to the truth of your mission. You will most surely pledge to him and help him. He said, “Do you acknowledge and accept My bond on this condition?”

They replied: "We accept this mission." Said He: "Then be witness to this covenant and I am the other witness to this covenant."

(Q 3:81)

Here our beloved Prophet (ﷺ) has been singled out as a unique personality. The verse means that the Prophets had to build the foundation so that the last Prophet would present Islam in its perfect form. Why should *Nabī 'Isā* (as) come as a *khalīfah* again or rather as an assistant. The second advent of *Nabī 'Isā* (as) is his coming as our Prophet's assistant. Almighty Allāh selected *Nabī 'Isā* (as), who had a unique birth so that he may live a long life up to the time that he is needed in order to assist in the mission of our *Nabī* (ﷺ). Thus he will come to fulfil that *pledge* that was given by all Prophets. *Nabī 'Isā* will appear during that time when the Muslims will find themselves downtrodden and dejected.

Thus, according to the Qur'ān, our Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has a personality which is unique in the entire creation; it is no wonder that this *mi'rāj* was conferred on him.

Also, according to a *ḥadīth qudsī* Almighty Allāh said:

لَوْلَاكَ لَمَّا خَلَقْتُ الْأَفْلَاقَ

O Prophet, if I had not created thee, I would not have created anything in this universe.

And the Qur'ān says in *Sūrah Al-Najm*:

وَهُوَ بِالْأَفْقِ الْأَعْلَى ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّى
فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى فَأَوْحَى إِلَى عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَى

Appearing in the horizons loftiest part and then drew near and came close until he was but two bow-lengths away, or even nearer and thus did God reveal unto His servant whatever he deemed right to reveal.

(Q 53:7–10)

According to the *ḥadīth*: the Angel Jibrīl (as), came and performed a surgical operation on the Holy Prophet (ṣ) and the vehicle, *Burrāq* – an electrically propelled vehicle, (lightning – from *barqun*) came. In this vehicle he performed his journey and Jibrīl was the driver. They reached a point where Jibrīl said that neither himself nor his vehicle could go any further, because they will be destroyed beyond that point. Another vehicle was sent.

All these utterances were made in history when no human being had any idea of electricity or an electrically propelled vehicle. This idea was used fourteen hundred years ago, and has become a reality only today! If the *ḥadīth* was a forgery, how could a person think about it that time? Therefore, how can one think that the ascension of our Prophet was impossible. The human being is essentially a spaceless and timeless being. Such was the Holy Prophet (ṣ) whose nature could overcome the limits of time and space.

This human personality has different “modes” or “gears”. The normal “gear” keeps us to this earth. But if the other “gear” can be used, which has been used by God Almighty, through that operation which has been spoken of in the *ḥadīth*, his level of existence was changed. It was changed to his own nature – a spaceless and timeless being. Thus, he was not limited by space and time.

We know about different types of time: mechanical time, psychological time, biological time, metaphysical time, serial time, plus time, minus time, zero time, etc. The nature of minus time is such that if one travels in minus time that person actually reduces in age. These are the teachings of the scientists. Similarly with light of which there are different types: alpha rays, beta rays, gamma rays, x-rays, infra-red, ultra-violet rays, etc. The laws that govern these different types of rays are not the same.

Now imagine that the vehicle that was sent by Almighty Allāh (for the *mi·rāj*) was made in such a fashion as to exceed the speed of light. In how much time could it have travelled five hundred kilometres? Probably in zero time. In no time would he have arrived at zero time. Then we have minus time, and as mentioned in another *ḥadīth*: When

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the Holy Prophet returned from the mi'rāj his quilt was still warm.

How? Because he was travelling in minus time. We should try to understand the event of mi'rāj by observing the natural phenomena and the laws Allāh (swt) placed in them.

May Almighty Allāh grant us the understanding to accept this message and make us people whose ambition will transcend physical things or things limited to the spheres of this physical world. *Inshā-Allāh*.

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 10

The Challenge of the Twentieth Century

The twentieth century is a challenge to Muslims in particular. This challenge can be understood in terms of politics and philosophy of life. I shall focus my lecture on the latter aspect of belief and culture. What challenge does the twentieth century present to us as Muslims? The basic factors involved are the systems of values and culture. Initially, when Islam came, spiritual ideologies had emerged in different communities. The main idea common to all these ideologies was the concept of other-worldliness. One had to forsake one's worldly occupation and renounce this world as in mysticism. Life appeared as something mystifying. Buddhism considers this world to be an illusion; and to Christianity it is evil. These outwardly religions represent the *ideational culture*.

However, Islam came with a positive outlook on life that God is Absolute Good. Thus, whatever God created is also good and its misuse makes it evil. Islam changed the outlook of humanity and gave belief a unique character, as is mentioned in the *ḥadīth*:

بَدَأَ الْإِسْلَامُ غَرِيبًا

Islam began as something unique.

Islam says that true religious being is to spiritualise the life here on earth. Instead of tribal gods and idols, people should believe in the one true God, Allāh, who is above all human conception for, *there is none like Him*. (Q 42:11).

It was a revolutionary idea even to those who claimed to be monotheists for it combined the notion of “*this-worldliness*” with “*other-worldliness*.” As we have been taught to pray since childhood:

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً

O Lord! grant us the good of this world as well as the hereafter.

(Q 2:201)

This philosophy of life reforms this world, establishes (here) the kingdom of God between the good and virtuous and eradicates all evil. The idea of Islam was not to renounce the world but to conquer it as a servant of Allāh who establishes all that is good. Thus Islam provides a comprehensive way of life with clear-cut directions to Muslims. The Muslim community – which started in the most glorious manner – was confronted by the Roman and the Persian Empires. These empires were destroyed, both politically and ideologically. Islam was therefore a challenge to the world, as the Qur’ān tells us:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ
بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ
كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ

Allāh sent the Prophet (and Islam) with guidance based on truth and that this way of life may overpower other systems not true, even though the unbelievers may detest it.

(Q 9:33)

The mission for the Muslims are told in the Holy Qur’ān is :

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

You are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong and believing in Allāh.

(Q 3:110)

Those who understood the meaning and mission of Islam projected a challenge to the rest of the world. The world saw a comprehensive revolution by a small group of Muslims, trained and inspired by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and took the challenge to the farthest regions of the world. The Muslims became pioneers on all fronts: they became the teachers in all branches of knowledge and personified the highest moral standards and spiritual values. They were respected for it because they took the lead in spiritualising culture to an extent that many countries became “Arabicised”, like North Africa. This was the impact of Islam which came with such beauty that people not only loved Islam, but also its followers.

Islam even penetrated Spain, where Muslims built up a civilisation and culture that will remain the envy of all peoples. When the Muslims built universities, hospitals, observatories, and educational institutions, Europe was still in a state of medieval barbarism. The Church in Europe fought against the forces of enlightenment and the Europeans were compelled to study under the Muslims.

The basis of this was two-fold:

- Knowledge came to Europe through the Muslims, the Church hating the Muslims, and
- Christianity was built on the conflict between faith and reason. It based its philosophy on faith only. The philosophy and scientific knowledge that evolved and followed was considered against the Church. Hence, the saying of the church fathers, “The blood of the martyr is the seed of the church.”

Subsequent history evolved a philosophy that was based on materialism and atheism. Thus the philosophy of modern civilisation is atheistic and materialistic in the realm of belief; sensualistic and hedonistic in the domain of morality; exploitative in the field of economics and expedient in the political arena.

This modern civilisation has branched into two camps, namely: philosophical materialism or capitalism and scientific materialism or communism. Do not be fooled by the difference in terminology, both ideologies are materialistic through and through. No wonder, if you believe in God today, you are considered reactionary and if you do not believe in God, you are considered to be progressive and modern. If you do not believe in morality, you are modern, but if you believe in truth, goodness, moral integrity and chastity then you are outdated. If you do not believe in ethical principles or moral foundations in business, you are prosperous. This is the real challenge!

Consequently, Islam taught the Muslims principles of greatness in this world through virtue, Almighty Allāh says in the Holy Qur'ān;

وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ

Keep your powers at the highest pitch against them.

(Q 8:60)

If you do not do it you will suffer very badly. The time is going to come when the forces against you are going to become greater. Therefore, acquire knowledge (in the realm of technology, commerce, economics, military and spirituality). Unless you maintain that status for all time, as soldiers of Allāh (swt), you will be in trouble. This is the challenge for us because Islam teaches us to obtain all the good of this world as well as of the hereafter. When our enemies overpowered us on the battlefield, we were enslaved and at a loss as how to balance ourselves.

The challenge is not an ordinary challenge. Most of us are still asleep. The theory of the pendulum clock is an example of regression of the Muslim community. When the 'Abbāsīd caliph sent its first delegation

to Europe, he sent a pendulum clock, first made by a Muslim in Syria, as gift to the Emperor Charlemagne. When the clock was presented to Charlemagne his advisor said to Charlemagne, "These Muslims are very clever, they have put a ghost inside it and this is going to cause great damage to us." But, the situation is reversed in the nineteenth century. When the Bedouins used to rob the pilgrims, they would find a clock in the dead person's pocket, listen to it, throw it on the ground and shouted: "It is a devil!".

Modern civilisation with all its glamour is alluring to our youth and they imitate the glamour only, which is natural. The Holy Qur'ān says:

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ
يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا

When comes the help of Allāh and victory, and thou dost see the people enter Allāh's religion in crowds.

(Q 90:1-2)

The opposite is happening now. **This is the challenge.** This is not politics. This is religion!

How is this challenge to be met? Reformers arose in many countries and they tried to cure the disease which inflicted the Muslims, but conditions have degenerated. This community has been divided into more sects because we are not producing thinkers like Imām Ghazzālī, Imām Shāfi'ī, Imām Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, and many others. We are producing charlatans, very ordinary persons including myself. We don't understand and are like the blind men from India who went to see an elephant. We do not have that wisdom therefore matters are becoming worse! The one blind person says that the elephant is like a thick rope, another says that it is like a pillar. Are we not doing the same? Why are we becoming more divided and not progressing like the early Muslims? That healthy spiritual and intellectual climate does not exist anymore. Neither do the conditions for a healthy, moral pattern of life.

Can this be our end? No, it cannot be! Even if one spark remains, it can be converted into the biggest fire that can burn out all the evil within us. This is the same spark our Prophet (ﷺ) placed in the hearts of his companions. This spark is that genuine *īmān* in Almighty Allāh. If we can only understand that *īmān* is not a mere ritual or formal exercise, but something real and alive which must be cultivated. This force made our forefathers great and this *īmān* became the real challenge. But this *īmān* was not for any racial or political aggrandisement, nor for causing any harm or evil to anyone. This *īmān* was a challenge only for the establishment for all that is good and eradicating all that is evil for all of humanity. We shall have to return to that *īmān*.

When we read the Qur’ān and the life of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions, we will discover that we are very different, even those amongst us who are representatives of Islam. Read the Qur’ān and try to think about the qualities of a genuine Muslim:

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ
هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا

The servants of Allāh (The Merciful Lord) are only those who walk on this earth with humility. If the ignorant people want to drag them into fights and quarrels, they say: ‘Our ideal in life is peace’.

(Q 25:63)

How many of us are like that and have it as our watchword to be humble? Try to judge for ourselves – and judge others silently – for the sake of understanding only.

وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَمًا

Those who spend their nights standing in front of their Lord and prostrating.

(Q 25:64)

Are we doing it? Where will that spiritual and moral fibre come from if we don't practice it?

Today, our enemies have no need to destroy us, for Muslims kill and damage [other] Muslims best! This is our condition. This topic requires volumes, but whatever has been said it is not to become frustrated, for Allāh (swt) says:

وَلَا تَأْيِسُوا مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يَأْيِسُ
مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْكَافِرُونَ

A Muslim, however weak in Iman he or she may be, can never allow frustration to overpower him or her except those who have no faith.

(Q12:87)

قُلْ يَعْبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ
رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

Proclaim to these servants of mine who have been cruel to themselves (by damaging themselves and transgressing) – do not despair of Allāh's mercy, for Allāh forgives all sins; for He is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

(Q 39:53)

Therefore,

وَأَنِيبُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلُمُوا لَهُ

Turn to your Lord, approach Him, come near Him and bow to His will.

(Q 39:54)

Try to imbibe godliness in the manner it should be done and the miracle that happened fourteen hundred years ago is bound to happen

again. It is bound to happen for all time. But the condition is: *anībū ilā rabbikum wa aslimū lah*. To carry the label of a Muslim only will not do. Half-hearted action does not help. Doubting which is right and wrong will not do. *Al-yaqīn* – an indomitable *faith* – that alone will help us, and this faith cannot be acquired by sermons only.

Every Muslim should study Islam and the Qur’ān. Study the message. Let’s investigate for ourselves and we’ll find that Islam today is the only panacea (universal cure) for the ills and problems of mankind. Islam is that alchemy that can turn base metals into gold. Islam can benefit us in this life and in the hereafter. The seeker will acquire real *īmān*. Islam did not come to wage war, but to advise positive living, to invite others with love and affection, with sympathy and the best of goodwill. Understand Islam in the light of the demands of this modern age and do not be affected by any group or sect. If there is any good in any group, that good must be acknowledged, if there is any bad, that bad should not be admired for that would be *sabīlah al-Jāhiliyyah* – to follow the way of the days of ignorance.

Allāh is Truth, Islam is the way of truth and we have to learn that we should be true to ourselves, true to our fellow beings and true to Allāh (swt). The threat to our value system and culture is a challenge we can and should face with the weapons of virtue, godliness and sacrifice. The challenge can be met with the weapon of glory and greatness which comes through humility and godliness and not through arrogance and vice.

My dear brothers and sisters, some people think that this is the end. The conditions that exist are not the conditions of the termination of our existence. The conditions are the throes (the pains) of a re-birth. The community is the womb out of which the new forces are to emerge and the community (womb) is experiencing those throes so that every member of the community feels it. But, blessed are those who can understand, feel and realise the challenge that has come through our beloved Prophet (ṣ). Almighty Allāh has set it as a challenge:

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ

The forces of evil want to extinguish with their mouths the light that Allāh has sent, but He is going to perfect this light even though the unbelievers detest it.

(Q 61:8)

The question is, who will be selected by Allāh (swt) to play this role? Let every one of us aspire to be one of those through whom Allāh (swt) will accomplish His design, of making Islam the dominating force on the face of the earth. Almighty Allāh said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٌ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٌ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ

O Believers, if you are slack in your duty towards your Din, then Allāh will bring others in your place, those whom He will love and they will love Him genuinely. They will have goodwill towards the believers and strive against the unbelievers, they will struggle and strive and exert to establish goodness, justice and piety on this earth, without any regard (fear) for themselves.

(Q 5:54)

The invitation from Allāh (swt) is there and it depends upon us to take up this challenge. May He inspire us and all the Muslims of the world to understand the nature of this spiritual challenge. May He enable us to conquer this challenge for in that lies the good for humanity at large.

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 11

Why Religion?

WHAT SOLUTION CAN THE DIFFERENT RELIGIONS
OF THE WORLD OFFER TO OUR PROBLEMS?

Judaism, Christianity and Islam belong to the same family, and consequently, when I speak on Islam, I'll be speaking on behalf of this entire family. What is peculiar about this twentieth century? Wars have been fought throughout the history of mankind and the twentieth century is characterised by what a famous thinker said: "The previous ages were the ages of faith and this modern age is the age of doubt."

Humanity is marching headlong towards disbelief in all those values which have been preached and cherished by the great teachers of mankind. We shall have to take into consideration why materialism arose and what the factors are which contributed to it. If we are able to find the causes of materialism, we might be able to find the cure for those ailments from which mankind is suffering.

Some centuries ago, when this modern intellectualistic, sceptical and technological civilisation was born, the world was at a stage the scientists refer to as the ideational culture. This is a culture that is "otherworldly" in its outlook and mystical in its approach and founded on what is called "faith" as opposed to "reason". Contrary to this, is the sensate culture. The foundation of this culture is on "this-worldliness", and the approach here is intellectualistic and materialistic as opposed to a spiritual orientation of life. Hegel was probably right

when he said that the world was a process of dialectical or argumentative in nature, which is all the time under the control of the thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

If this materialistic and scientific civilisation had not been in the grip of the ideational culture, this antithesis would not have been born. It was the thesis that gave birth to this anti-thesis in the form of materialistic culture. This goes back in history where there has been a conflict between faith and reason. A dichotomy has been conceived and this conflict is very well known.

Those who tasted the fruits of knowledge and culture based on pure intellectualism, gradually imbibed contempt for a philosophy based only on faith. This is exemplified by Marxist materialism and atheism in the form of Marxist philosophy. If we try to find a solution to this present day materialistic philosophy and all that it stands for in the old ideational approach to life, we will fail miserably. The thesis was there and the antithesis appeared and the only solution that can be possible will be a synthesis of the merits of both. It can be a philosophy of life wherein faith and reason can be harmoniously blended into “this-worldliness” and “other-worldliness”. The principle of unity which has been preached by Christianity, Judaism and Islam can be the foundation of a fully fledged and comprehensive philosophical way of life.

There is no going back to where this tragedy started, for that outlook of life has already been defeated. As a Muslim, representing all the holy Prophets like Jesus Christ, Prophet Moses, Prophet Abraham and others, I wish to emphasise here that this hydra-headed monster of materialism is a real challenge for all those who believe. The defeat of this monster of materialism lies in following and accepting those values taught by the great divine teachers of mankind.

May I add that this modern materialist philosophy preaches in the realm of metaphysics, it is uncompromising materialism. You may call it scientific materialism or philosophical materialism.

In the field of ethics or morals, this materialistic philosophy of life

stands outright as hedonism (soft pleasure) and utilitarianism (actions being judged right because they are useful).

In the field of psychology it stands for behaviouristic psychology or mechanistic psychology, wherein all those values for which we stand have been completely discarded. In the field of economics, this modern philosophy stands for exploitation while politics is guided by the notion of expediency.

Because of these developments, our generations are becoming not only more sceptical about the beliefs which their forefathers held, but they are choosing the materialistic way of life and the pursuit of physical sensuous pleasure! The corollary or result of materialism is that if a materialistically oriented person does not believe in God and the higher values, then the only way open to him is the pursuit of the maximum amount of sensuous pleasure.

What do we find in this modern age of the permissive society? What are the aims, techniques, methods and the goal of this society? Every one of us knows the havoc which the permissive society has played with humankind. We read about it everyday in the world press so there can be no two opinions about these developments. These developments are bound to continue until and unless there can be the possibility of inviting mankind to Almighty Allāh on the basis of those canons of thought in which humanity believes. We are all aware that the history of human thought has been in constant movement, that is, from the notion of pluralism to that of monism.

Even if one studies the modern theory of matter it is not regarded as eternal. The origin of matter can only be conceived as a process of *quality* transforming itself into *quantity*. Consequently, at the commencement of this world it is those higher or spiritual values, which are the warp and woof of this world. However, the trend of thought is to follow materialism. Consequently, it is high time that we should stand up for a philosophy taught by our great teachers: the philosophy of unity.

I would like to present this philosophy on behalf of Islam in a very

summarised fashion. According to Islam, God is Unity. Then because God is Unity and He has created everything of this world, therefore the world or this cosmos is Unity. This further means that this cosmos is a moral order and a reign of Law. Because God is Unity and this world is unity, there can be no such thing as sacred knowledge and profane knowledge. He has created the human individual but the individual personality cannot be conceived as composed of different facets and faculties placed in watertight compartments. The human individual will have to be conceived as an organic unity and the entire human pursuit in this life will have to be perceived in the same fashion.

In this manner we can go on building up this principle of monotheism. According to the Qur'ān, faith and reason are not antithetical; and faith without reason is superstition. They are integrated in the principle of unity. If faith and reason can be combined and conceived as an organic whole: faith belonging to the higher reason and discursive thought (intellectual approach) to the lower reason, then this great problem will be resolved.

There can be a conflict between what faith teaches and what reason teaches. We can also affirm that if it can be proven on the basis of objective grounds that there is a teaching which has been given by God, and a human being finds out something which appears to be different from that which is God's word, then, because God is All-Wise, we can rationally believe that our discoveries are subject to change and alteration because of the fallibility of human thought.

Further, this great conflict has been there in the thinking of the world of faith which fixed its gaze entirely on the spiritual value and left the field to those who are non-spiritual or secular. The secular world took charge of the fields of economics, social welfare, politics. If this gulf can actually be bridged, as Islam does, then this di-archy, this conflict, bad blood, indifference, enmity and hostility between the world of faith and the world of reason will vanish.

Finally, I would like to emphasise that God will remain a revolting idea until and unless there is a comprehensive scheme of life where

God can be experienced at every step, in the factory, school, market place and inside those temples of worship. Islam says that God is Absolute Good and whatever He created is Absolute Good. Consequently, all our activities in this world are good and it becomes really good when every activity is undertaken with the fullest consciousness that a person is behaving as a co-worker with God in his divine scheme. Every activity is for His sake and not for any ulterior motive.

This tragedy of scepticism and atheism emerged as a reaction to an ideational culture because action and reaction are equal and opposite. It had to go the other extreme. So as a reaction against the ideational culture, sensate culture was born and it is now ruling the scene. Let both of them be married and form a synthesis and the world will get rid of all those dangers that are looming large on the horizon. Humanity will again be God's family living under God's protection and loving God as it should love Him.

There is a question as to the reason I believe in God?, I wish to reply as follows:

There are three types of arguments in philosophy regarding God's existence:

- the ontological argument – the argument to prove the existence of God through analysis of the nature of the concept of God.
- the teleological argument – the study of the purpose in natural processes or occurrences.
- cosmological argument – the argument dealing with the origin, processes and structure of the universe.

The teleological argument shows that God is an ultimate value and not of this world which we see and know. Of course, about everything that is ultimate, much can be said on both sides and consequently there are people who find the courage to deny and take a stand that there is no God.

Firstly, to those who say that there is no God, I would like to say that no human being has the right to say that there is no God. This

statement of denial of God is the most irrational, illogical and baseless statement which any human being can make. Even those of you who are not students of logic and philosophy can understand very well that, if a person says that a certain thing is not present in this building, then he will have to prove that he has a comprehensive knowledge of this building. If that person does not possess a comprehensive knowledge of every nook and cranny such a person has no right to make that statement.

However, if another person states that a certain thing is to be found in this building, then it is not necessary for that person to know every nook and cranny of this building, for it is quite possible that that thing is lying at the door as he entered. Therefore his statement is accepted.

Thus, anybody who makes the statement that there is no God, will have to prove that he possesses a comprehensive knowledge of all that exists. If he can prove it, then alone it may be possible to make this statement. Even then his statement may be wrong, for there are illusions from which human beings suffer. Therefore this stand that there is no God is not possible for any human being on the face of the earth and it should be completely ruled out.

Furthermore, we can take the argument through another channel. There can be two points of view about what exists and about what we experience about this world. One point of view is that this world has been created by a Supreme Being, by God, and it has been created *ab novo*, from nothing. The other point of view is being put forward nowadays that this world has not been created by a God or by anything else.

The question then arises: if this world has not been created by God, then how did it come into being except by accident? It further means that this world has come into being by chance, and, chance means absence of Law. Thus this world is in its very origin a place without a purpose, a blind world and process. If there is no God then material reality is the only reality and everything in this world is only physical or material. This is the line of argument which the materialists take.

Bear in mind that materialistic metaphysics is wedded to behaviouristic or mechanistic psychology. Mechanistic psychology denies the existence of the soul and consider sit as idiosyncratic, even the mind is regarded as something nonsensical. Those of you who might have studied psychology will know that they say that there is no soul. According to mechanistic psychology the brain is merely a physiological, biological mechanism that works through its cells on the basis of a permutation of combinations and the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile.

On the basis of the materialistic philosophy, everything is conceived in physical terms. The human being is only a physical being and this world is only physical or material. To conceive of the mind or the spirit in the human being is explicitly ruled out.

If this world is a chance order because it came into being by chance, what does it mean? It implies that everything in this world comes into being by chance, human beings enjoy, suffer and die out by chance. And because this world is physical, there can be no moral bond of unity between the different human beings. The moral bond of unity can only be when we postulate a Creator who created this world and all human beings according to a plan and for a particular purpose.

It is through God that this moral bond of unity emerges. If this world is a chance order, then every human being comes into this world by chance. There can be no question of any rational bond of unity between human beings except in terms of physical values; and physical values are always based on expediency.

Furthermore, if the human being is only a physical being, then the ideal for a human being would be to acquire the maximum amount of pleasure because it is human nature to acquire pleasure and avoid pain. To acquire the maximum amount of pleasure for a human being would mean to acquire the maximum amount of sensuous pleasure. Then the principle of fellow feeling or sympathy, which is the highest principle of morals, will fall to the ground.

For example, suppose I am a millionaire and there is a poor, starving person. If I give him one rand in order that he may buy food and preserve his life, then according to this philosophy, it will be an immoral act on my part. I will deprive myself to the extent of one rand's physical sensuous pleasure and that is contrary to this principle.

Then again, if this world is a blind process and a chance order then all attempts to formulate plans and formulating codes of law, whether it is for the administration of the family or business concerns or educational institutions or anything else, would be an unnatural and irrational activity. It is against the very nature of this world, which is a chance order and a lawless world.

To carry the argument further, logically, you will find that there are groups who believe in materialism and atheism but they also talk about the welfare of the common man. But their principles of welfare for fellow human beings and disbelief in God are combined in the principle of expediency. It is not based on any rational principle because the two cannot be combined.

The only mottos that can emerge from the philosophy of denial of God are two.

- "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." For this world and human life is a bad bargain. The world to them has no meaning, life has absolutely no meaning and meaning comes into life only through belief in God. Without this belief there is no meaning.
- "Every one to himself and the devil takes the hindmost." What claim can another human being have on me except belief in God, that is, a Being who has created everything *ab novo*.

He brought into existence all human beings with a definite plan and for a certain purpose. Only then does this sanction come in, otherwise it is sheer expediency (extreme self-interest); and expediency stands on shifting sands. No organised society can exist on the basis of expediency. Expediency is conducive to the moment and is opportunistic. The means justifies the end. A society must function on laws that are universally binding and applicable. Otherwise there would be no basis for having a social order. Finally, the only logical

consequence for the theory which denies the existence of God is that “might is right”. Charles Darwin, the founder of this materialistic philosophy applied this principle in the field of biology thus the adage “the survival of the fittest” (cf. Darwin’s *Origin of Species*). These same words are to be used in every context on the basis of this materialistic philosophy which denies the existence of God. If might is right, then every one of us will be living under the law of the jungle and would like to commit suicide before we should die.

Therefore, why should we believe in God? If we think seriously about life: the cares and anxieties due to our different associations during the day, or we go to sleep with certain griefs. The next morning we wake up with numerous anxieties regarding all the tasks we have to complete. If I am here by chance, the world is a chance order. Life is just a blind process and has no meaning. Is life worth all this? It cannot be. The worth in life and the meaning in life comes only through believing in God and we should believe in God for our safety, security and happiness.

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

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CHAPTER 12

Westernised Muslims

Muslims all over the world are faced with the problem of readjustment to the environment. We are unable to find a solution to our present decline and degradation, whether we belong to South Africa, Pakistan or the Arab world or anywhere else. Muslims find themselves in critical conditions and are even insulted. A Muslim poet asked: "What has happened to us, that today we are looked down upon by the other communities of the world? We have become like international mercenaries and outcasts." Despite the fact that we are seven hundred million in the world and the inheritors of the glorious history of Islam, we enjoy no status in the international affairs of the world.

Although we take pride in the fact that we are the *muwahiddūn* – the believers in the One God – we generally have a wrong notion of Allāh. This sounds like an amazing statement for we are believers in the One True God and His Unity but unconsciously, we believe that He is capricious and not a righteous God! Let me explain further. The Holy Qur'ān says that Allāh (swt) created this universe with all the laws that govern everything in it, but He has imposed it upon Himself to follow His Law. The Qur'ān says:

إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

Say, my Lord is on the straight path.

(Q 11:56)

Like we have been asked to pray, Allāh (swt) is saying about Himself that He is also on the straight path. He is not unjust and does not indulge in favouritism. Here, Islam negates the concept in the Bible that the children of Israel are the chosen people of God.

Allāh has made the Law and sent the Guidance. Whoever follows the Guidance is dear to God, whoever does not follow the Guidance whether a Muslim or anything else has absolutely no status in the presence of God. Unfortunately, we proclaim that our God is Righteous but we unconsciously believe He is not because we believe He has chosen heaven for us, and hell for others.

This ugly theory has no basis in the Qur'ān, nor the *ḥadīth* and this point of view has brought calamity to the Muslims. If only they remembered that “*dunyā*” is “*dār al-‘amal*” (house of action) – the place where a person earns heaven on the basis of faith and action. And not on the basis of superstition, ceremonialism, ritualism or petty bickering on theological issues. Salvation is not on the basis of formalism and externalism *but* on the basis of the transformation of the human personality, on the human social order, and on the basis of the spirit of *īmān billāh* (faith in Allāh). It is also based on the spiritual orientation of life, to follow the divine law and the commandments given by the Holy Prophet (ṣ).

The Qur'ān says:

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَىٰ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا

It is not possible for a true believer, whether male or female, to have his or her own freedom of choice after he or she has been given a command by Allāh and His Beloved Prophet.

(Q 33:36)

Islam means discipline which must be followed, Islam is not merely a signboard. Imagine a shop with signboards but without commodities. Can there be any business? The Muslims – especially those who claim to be religious – seem to believe that only signboards can do the entire job!

Travel to the east or the west as I have, and observe the different communities whether they are majorities or minorities and you will notice a crisis of moral character in the Muslim world. Muslims are not what they claim to be, they tend to be hypocritical, whether conscious or unconscious.

Why do we shed crocodile tears because we have fallen so low? We are going to fall lower and Allāh Almighty is not going to forgive us, because He is the Righteous God and not capricious. He has to run the entire cosmos with everything in it, and remember that He created all human beings. You and I can take pride that we are Muslims, but remember that we are Muslims by accident.

How many of us devoted ourselves to acquiring education about Aristotle, Plato and Kant, but ignored Islam? Therefore, we remain Muslims because our parents were Muslims. Bear in mind that Almighty Allāh has not promised anything to this category of Muslims. Promises have only been given to the believers – the *mu'minūn*. History bears testimony to it. During the Makkan period of the Holy Prophet's (ﷺ) life, when the handful of Muslims were being persecuted, Almighty Allāh's promise came to them:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ

Allāh promises to those who cultivate imān and who lead lives of purity, of moral integrity and the grandeur of character, he promises to them you will be the greatest dominant force in this earth.

(Q 24:55)

The infidels of Makkah jeered at them and said that: “Your leader wants to boost your morale and holds out false promises.” But history tells us that this small group of Muslims became the master force in the world and remained the supreme political and ideological power for centuries! This was the promise that was fulfilled, and the Holy Qur’ān says:

وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

Honour belongs to Allāh and His Prophet and to the believers.

(Q 63:8)

to those who possess a dynamic, loving and vibrant faith in Allāh. To *them* belong the honour and if we do not have any honour in this world, then we are not *Mu'minīn*. The promise came, but not to the *Muslim*, not to those who pay lip service, not a mere intonation, nor a spiritless proclamation of the *shahādah*.

Shall we remain in this state? Is it really worthy of a human being to stay in this abject condition? Do we realise that we have reached the rockbottom of our degradation? The proof of it is that the most persecuted, the most hated, the smallest ideological minority in the world, that is, the Jews, snatched away from you your *qiblah al-awwal* (Jerusalem), surrounded on all sides by so-called Muslims!

Those Muslims are helpless in spite of the fact that they are begging for help from the Soviet Union, China and elsewhere but still cannot do anything! What a contrast between that handful of Muslims in Makkah, to whom that promise was made and fulfilled, against the heaviest odds. What a pity for us that we are seven hundred million and we cannot do anything!

This hopeless apathy is a measure of our *īmān*. We have no *īmān*! And we still believe that the system of guidance, the Qur'ān and *sunnah*, is true! That is the biggest tragedy. We have no *īmān* but we believe; hence we cannot say on the Day of Judgement that we did not know. We will be told: "*You knew it, but you did not follow My guidance, you followed your hawā al-nafs, your baser or lower self! You followed the devil.*"

Allāh has promised and proclaimed:

فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِرْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ
اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا

*Whoever revolts against the devil and establishes his loyalty towards
Allāh, he obtains a support which will never fail him.*

(Q 2:256)

Why is all the support failing us? Don't we think? Don't we have minds? Have we become so foolish and ignorant not to understand this at least?

My dear brothers and sisters, Islam is the alchemy that transforms all the base metals into gold, and it has proved itself to be the alchemy. It was sent by Allāh to the most backward people in the world – the Arabs of those days. Thomas Carlyle in his *On Heroes, Hero-worship and the Heroic in History* said: "They were a people who made no mark in known history, those nomadic Arabs, a handful in number, filthy and barbaric in character. To them was sent Allāh's greatest prophet, and within twenty years, this crowd of barbarians was transformed into a group of supermen!" And they challenged the entire world of *bāṭil* (of all that was false) and they conquered the world and they established the truth! What are we doing? If my remarks sound bitter I ask pardon. But ask the doctors – a patient who suffers from malaria should not be given anything that is sweet – the remedy for malaria is bitter quinine!

Another important point raised was that the Muslims in the Republic of South Africa are living in a western-oriented country. They are a minority and living under a non-Muslim majority. This problem is not confined to South Africa only. It is to be found in every Muslim community, even in Pakistan, which is a country with an overwhelming Muslim majority. The Muslims are leaving the old culture and running after the new, to whatever country you may go. It is not a case of being a minority. They are doing the same things in Pakistan and on a stupendous scale in Turkey, Iran and in the Arab Middle East.

If you go there you will find that they are more westernised than the

western people. There are people who condemn them – fortunately or unfortunately. I don't condemn them because there are certain laws of the historical process called in the philosophy of history – the principle of *historical compulsion*. And this principle claims that however *much a community may try to behave in a certain manner, the historical forces that are around it, compel it to do as they want it to do.*"

A community can make itself immune to outside influences only when it is definitely superior and more virile than those other communities that are there in the environment. But if the community is docile, if the community has no law to govern its life, if it is bankrupt in respect of its character and its ideals, then it is, as the saying goes: "The devil occupies the vacant home."

A community which has no positive idealism and is not struggling to achieve the goal of that idealism, is a passive community. And the nature of God's Law is (the Sociological Law) that all human beings are moving ahead like a caravan. This caravan of humanity is moving all the time and whatever portion of the caravan becomes stagnant or stationary, or those who do not want to move, the law is that they will be thrown back. They will not be allowed to be stationary but will be trampled. This is the law.

What we have been doing is that we have left the mission of Islam long ago. We were not inspired by the Islamic Idealism anymore. Our plans were not what the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) gave us. We were indulging in all sorts of unIslamic activities even before these Western powers came to wrest away our sovereignty in Africa and Asia. After they came, they tried their best to de-Islamise us. It was a duty to themselves that their potential enemies should be crushed. They did just that and we cannot complain.

In the meantime, another tragedy has happened. Islam, like every other religion or system, comprises certain components. The first being the values of Islam, from which emerge the norms, and then the laws. Then follows the rules and regulations such as etiquette – personal, religious and social.

What do we find in the Muslim world of today? The concept of values and norms have been forgotten. We stand by the Law. Our ‘*ulamā*’ also study only the Law, the *fiqh*. This Law is given to the people and when that Law degenerates among the people, then only etiquette is left. How far have we gone in this?

Last year (1969), in New York, I had the opportunity of addressing a group of new converts to Islam. As I entered the hall, I thought that all the people present were villagers from Pakistan. I could never dream that the Afro-Americans could dress and behave like that. I inquired from the chairman and he confirmed that they were all Americans and none were “imported” from Pakistan. After the lecture, I invited all those people to me and asked them to explain why they were wearing that type of dress. They replied that it was the symbol of piety. They said that great Islamic workers came there and taught them that if they wanted to be really good Muslims in the eyes of God, they should wear a triangular pyjamas, the quadrangular *kurta* and the hexagonal cap!

It took me a long time to convince them that they were committing a crime by wearing that dress in America. Firstly, no dress has been prescribed by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). He only prescribed rules of decency about dress. Secondly, if you wear this strange type of dress then you are a walking propaganda against Islam among the Americans. If the condition to become a Muslim is to wear those clothes then the other Americans would refuse to become Muslim.

The problem is not unsolvable. If we go to the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth*, we’ll find that many things we think are compulsory are in fact not compulsory. Islam is a universal religion, which has come for all ages. Students of sociology know that the cultural pattern changes with the industrial pattern. The change in the cultural pattern leads to a change in the psychological pattern. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was aware of all that. He did not give this type of religious outlook that we have developed. It is we who are responsible for it.

Islam begins with the values and the moral life is the basis. Of course, the moral life is built on the spiritual orientation of life, in order to

acquire the purity of motive, as the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said:

أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا

The higher the morals of a person, the better is his īmān.

The measure of a person's Iman is his moral integrity and his behaviour. It is the moral life that is the foundation of the Islamic life. The moral life – as prescribed by Islam – can be followed and practised fully in every society, whether that society is South African, German, or American. This is what makes a Muslim!

The other external factors vary from community to community. The dress, for example, varies from Indonesia to Morocco and Nigeria. We cannot object to the national dress of a people. Our 'ulamā' raised objections to the English suit because it was imported from another community. They are correct in that to adopt the dress of another community corrupts one's outlook and creates a sort of inferiority complex. But the English suit has now been accepted by the upper strata of Muslim society all over the world. So, the problem of imitating foreign dress out of inferiority does not apply. Islam emphasises the spiritual and the moral culture and if we follow those moral and spiritual teachings of Islam properly then that is what matters.

In Pakistan, for example, we find certain people who regard themselves alone to be Muslims. They behave in a strange way, for example, a Muslim merchant grows a long beard, wears a *kurta*, a triangular pyjama and wears the *ḥājī's* cap – showing himself to be a person who is dedicated to Islam and Allāh (swt). He makes a survey of the market and Muslim business all over Pakistan.

Go to Karachi, which is a Muslim town, and try to buy pure butter (prescribed by a doctor). You will find different brands of butter, but you will not find pure butter. These people who adopt all these paraphernalia of piety who own all those dairy farms and factories earn their money in this manner.

In Pakistan people have been caught so many times adding impurities to their dairy products. Once, a well-known *hājī* was caught red-handed. He installed a factory in an underground cell where he manufactured butter from grease and that butter inflicted polio on about forty children! This is the type of Islam of those so-called religious people! Which Islam is this that has to be adjusted to a particular age and area? And mind you, these people go to Makkah four times per year with *ḥarām* money and when they come back they are welcomed, praised and garlanded by all their friends that so-and-so has performed the *ḥajj* seven or seventeen times.

The sores on the body of the Muslim community are so many. It seems as if we have lost completely our grip on what Islam stands for. We have coined our own Islam. Certain portions of Islam have been taken, like prayers, fasting, charity and pilgrimage and given a certain organic unity, and this is the Islam we carry.

Islam can adjust itself anywhere; in a capitalist country or a communist country. It is adjusting itself under Jamaluddin Nasir, Turkey, Pakistan, etc. Why can't it adjust itself here? Why all this hue and cry about it? But as far as the original Islam of the Qur'ān and *sunnah* is concerned, we have been told:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

You are the best ideological group which has been raised and chosen by Allāh for the purpose that you will establish all that is good and eradicate all that is evil, as soldiers of Allāh.

(Q 3:110)

If this ideal is not there for us, we won't know to proceed. If Islam is not a way of life and challenge for all evil, then Islam is only a cult with an otherworldly orientation combined with a few ethical principles.

CHAPTER 12

We treat and accept Islam as a cult and we do not go beyond these requirements. This problem requires a scientific analysis. If this problem is understood fully as to what is the pattern of life, which Islam gives; what are those things that are obligatory and what are optional, *then* only can we understand!

And if our ideal is to establish those ideals for the which Islam came, then this work can be done methodically, like in a scientific analysis. Prioritise one value after the other. If we do that, we will get an Islam that is very dynamic, progressive and enlightened. There will be no difficulty in living here as good Muslims and we'll be able to live Islam in a manner that will attract the non-Muslims!

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 13

The Qur'anic View of Disunity

As we all know, Islam is the religion of unity, but many of us do not know what the implications are when we make this statement. All we know is to be a good Muslim, to believe in Allāh (swt) as the one true God and that we should not commit any type of *shirk*. Actually it is not the case. The principle of unity is the principle that permeates throughout the philosophy of life and the code of life in Islam.

Allāh is One, therefore the entire universe is One because it has One Creator. Because the universe is one, it has been created by one Intelligent and All-Wise Being for a certain purpose. Therefore this universe is a moral order and because Allāh is One, all mankind is one family.

Therefore truth is one and cannot be two-sided. Consequently, emotive faith (faith based on emotion or religion) and cognitive faith (faith based on knowledge or reason), are both united in a single or organic whole. In Islam there is no conflict between faith and reason or faith and knowledge. Furthermore, Allāh is One therefore the entire humanity is one and the two sexes, male and female are also basically the same. They are one, but are differentiated by their biological functions and are equally honourable as human beings. So this concept of unity goes on.

The point I wish to make is that the principle of unity permeates the entire fabric of Islam as a code of life. It is not merely saying that Allāh is One, while Muslims remain in a disunited and disintegrated form. That is not Islam. As far as the principle of unity is concerned, the commandments, which have been given in the Holy Qur'an are very clear and explicit. Advice is not a command and to violate a command is *ḥarām* and to stick to *ḥarām* leads to *kufr*. Thus, we have been commanded in the Holy Qur'an:

وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا

Hold fast to the bond of unity which Allāh has created in the ummah and never divide yourselves into sects or groups on any grounds whatsoever.

(Q 3:103)

This command is laid down in connection with Muslim unity. In connection with religious groups which have been forming throughout Islamic history, especially in the latter days, we are told in the Holy Qur'an. *Mushriks* have been qualified further:

مِنَ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا
شِيَعًا كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ

From among those who divide themselves on petty religious issues and divide themselves into mutually hostile religious groups and each and every group regards itself alone as on the right path and the other group as absolutely contemptible (and kafir).

(Q 30:32)

Allāh Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an in this verse that this action of division of the Muslim community into warring and hostile groups is an action equivalent to *shirk*. About *shirk*, Allāh (swt) says in the Holy Qur'an:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ

The only thing that Allāh will not pardon on the Day of Judgement is shirk.

(Q 4:48)

He may pardon all other sins but not *shirk*. Can there be any doubt in the light of these verses that this community and the Muslims of the world at large are not committing *shirk*? This community which has been divided into mutually hostile religious groups? In the Holy Qur'an we are told, after this blessing of Islam has come to you,

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ
وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

Do not become like those of the previous ummahs who divided themselves on the basis of petty religious issues and turned themselves into sects, for them is a grave chastisement.

(Q 3:105)

The principle of unity as spoken of in the *ḥadīth* (there are numerous) are very clear, for example:

يُذِ اللّٰهُ مَعَ الْجَمَاعَةِ وَمَنْ شَذَّ شَذَّ فِي النَّارِ

The Muslim community is an organic whole, a unity, indivisible, and the help of Allāh (swt) comes only when they are in this state and whosoever gets out of this unity and creates disunity among them, will be thrown right away into the fire of hell.

This principle of unity is an established fact of Islam and of the Islamic way of life, and we shall have to consider the value system in the light of social norms of Islam wherein this unity has been established. The value system is as follows: There are three fundamental norms of the Islamic way of life or social order; unity, justice and selfless service to the others. Unity cannot be maintained unless the

principles of justice are maintained, such as selfless service to others, love and goodwill. Therefore Islam has laid stress on the principle of justice. If one reads the available records of the history of mankind one will find that the Qur'an is the first book in the known history of mankind where the concept of absolute justice has been given. For example in the Holy Qur'an we are told:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلّٰهِ

O believers, stand by justice in everything and every dimension of life. Stand by and be for justice not for the sake of any expediency (personal benefit) or any other motive, but purely for the sake of Allāh.

(Q 4:135)

When we do anything for the sake of Allāh, the ego is completely annihilated. All the sentiments will be placed before you on the Day of Judgement, as Allāh says:

وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ

... even though being just may damage you or go against you or against your parents or against your kith and kin.

(Q 4:135)

Otherwise, by simply offering prayers, which are noble deeds, without doing justice will not lead to *taqwā*. The Holy Qur'an has gone further in connection with justice, for example justice towards one's enemies.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلّٰهِ
شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ
أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا أَعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ إِنَّ
اللّٰهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

O believers should it happen that there are a group or groups that are hostile to you or towards your religion and you are dealing with them, you should always deal justly with them in spite of all the injustice from their side.

(Q 5:8)

Your duty and obligation is to be just in your dealings with them. This is the principle of justice that supports unity. Why does disunity come into a community? If you analyse this problem you will find that disunity comes through the clash of egos. When these individual egos are projected, justice cannot be satisfied. The very name "Islam" means "the annihilation of the ego" or "submergence of the ego" into the divine pleasure and Absolute Ego of God. It starts from this point and then gives the principle of justice in clear terms.

Greed is the other cause of disunity. The desire to acquire all the good of this world for oneself. Competition follows between all desiring individuals which lead to hostility and conflict and finally, disunity. They may be Muslims, but their personal interests are at variance and therefore there can be no unity between them. In the light of this, Islam has laid down the other principle of selflessness and sacrifice for others. Here, may I add, that if you study Islamic guidance in its natural order of revelation as received by the Prophet Muḥammad (s), you will find that the priorities, such as selflessness, were left out by us. In the first year of the call, the message was:

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ فَكَّرْ بِأَوْطَاعِمٍ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ
يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ أَوْ مَسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ

What do you understand about the most difficult and most rewarding virtue? It is the abolishment of slavery or feeding in times of stress and famine, an orphan who is knowing or near to you or the indigent who is down in the dust. And those who preach and teach and exemplify magnanimity and steadfastness, perseverance and human

dignity, and those who practice and preach compassion towards one another.

(Q 90:12–17)

‘*Aqabah* means walking on the steep path. Then we are told that the most important virtue is: “abolishment of slavery” from the world. Abolishment of social injustice which existed in the form of slavery was given to the Muslims as the highest virtue this *ummah* has to work for. The most basic need of human beings is food, more basic than shelter. So here the most basic need is being emphasised as that of the highest virtue. And the *īmān* has been mentioned only after this. Look at the focus of Islam. It can take the form of opening a charity, hospital or visiting a person who is sick or helping a person who is economically distressed. “*Marḥamah*” is a basic and all-comprehensive principle. This was the message of Islam in the first year of the Call and how was this message practised?

Regarding virtue we are told according the Holy Qur’ān:

لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ
الْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ
وَالنَّبِيِّنَ

Piety does not lie in mere adoption of direction for performing a ritual.

(Q 2:177)

but consists of a healthy set of beliefs, because no action can take place without belief based on: *the final accountability on the day of judgement, and the angels [who are the functionaries of Allāh in the universe], and the divine scriptures and all the divine messengers who came ...* (Q 2:177), articles of faith, without which a worldview you social philosophy is not possible. Here is where the human heart tries to become an obstruction:

وَأَتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ
وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ
الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ

Spending of your wealth for no other reason except for the love of Allāh, for your kith and kin, the orphan, for those who are destitute, for the wayfarer who may be in trouble whilst on his journey, for the emancipation and abolishment of slavery all over the world.

(Q 2:177)

Different categories of people who might need your help and service, have been mentioned here. Then only comes the mention of the establishment of prayer. Why have social virtues been mentioned first and prayer afterwards? Prayer is accepted by Almighty Allāh only from those who practice social virtue and not from others. Praying to Allāh (swt) is a selfish act on my part for I'm praying for myself. I'm not doing anything for others when I am praying. So, Islam has placed social virtue before personal virtue which is clear from all the verses in the Holy Qur'ān, as well as the verses mentioned earlier. All the wealth spent is voluntary spending and afterwards we have been told about *zakāh*, or compulsory spending.

Then Islam comes to the personal virtue of the personality culture: This is a social virtue. The Qur'ān continues,

وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا
وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ

Those who keep their promise when they make a promise. Those who are steadfast in their faith in God and who face every trial of this life with dignity and grace.

(Q 2:177)

Those who possess integrity of personality and face the challenges of life. Then the Qur'ān says:

وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ

They are true in their proclamation that they are believers and they alone are pious – they have taqwa.

(Q 2:177)

All these verses belong to the early part of the revelation. Furthermore, we read in the Qur'ān about sacrifice, about the fundamental, unavoidable characteristic of a Muslim's way of life:

يُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ

It is impossible to find a person who is genuinely a Muslim – that he will not sacrifice everything that he can afford for the benefit of others, even though it may cause him hardship.

(Q 59:9)

So the principle of Muslim unity is governed by these two principles. Unless a community follows these two principles, it will be merely a lip service. Examples of disunity are numerous, but I will not go into that now. However, let me relate one example of Muslim unity born of love for fellow beings. During the battle between the Muslims and the *kuffār* (disbelievers), several Muslims were seriously wounded and there were others who nursed the wounded soldiers. A voice was heard from one quarter: "I am thirsty, I am dying!" The person in charge of the wounded ran towards the thirsty person to offer him water. By the time he reached the wounded soldier, another voice called. "I am thirsty, I am dying." The first soldier refused to drink water unless the second person drank first. When the water carrier reached the second soldier another called out. This second soldier also refused to drink water unless the third one drank. When the water carrier reached the third soldier he was dead, so was the second and the first. This is the action of selfless service to our fellow Muslims and to human beings in general, which was inculcated into the followers of Islam by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).

This unbounded overflowing love by the Muslims became a unifying force and what was the consequence? The consequence was that the greatest miracle in the history of mankind took place. Muslims were able to meet the greatest challenges from the Roman to the Persian Empire, from within and without, in the most glorious manner. Not only did they become the sole superpower in the world, but taught the highest morals and spirituality. They also promoted the advancement of technology and industrial knowledge. This was born of unity.

As time passed, disunity came. As we very well know, wealth corrupts and power also corrupts and Muslims had both wealth and power. After some time, the original spirit began to wane and they became entangled in the materialistic pursuit of life and adopted that outlook. And what was the result? All our defeats or setbacks in the latter times and which are taking place in greater tempo nowadays, have been due to one great factor, and that is disunity. An example is the decisive battle that took place between Europe and Muslims in the heart of France.

The Muslim army was led by the great 'Abd al-Raḥmān, the Umayyad *khalīfah* of Spain. The non-Muslim armies were constituted of the French, Germans and neighbouring territories. The battle took place at Portieres near Paris. The Muslim army routed the combined might of Europe. But after the victory, disunity arose regarding the booty and fighting started amongst themselves during the night after the victory. When the retreating forces of Europe heard this, they returned and attacked the Muslim forces. Eventually the Muslims were forced back to Spain, and were ultimately expelled from Spain in the most ignominious manner. Later on, the enemies ruled over them in Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania, Libya and Algeria.

Another example in history is the powerful Moghul Empire, which Muslims built in India, the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent where Muslims ruled for over 800 years. Why did this great empire fall? Disunity was the cause! The provincial powers wanted to be separate from the central government of Delhi, so Muslim India became divided into different states. A small group of merchants from the British East

India Company could snatch from the Muslims the Muslim empire and establish their own. This was possible only through disunity.

Therefore, in spite of the enthusiasm and love Muslims have for Islam with one of the finest Muslim communities in the world, their problems only multiplied. Things have taken a very ugly shape and now they are worried about the future of their youth. What will happen to Islam when the youth become adults? Problems multiplied because of disunity.

The only solution for this small Muslim community in South Africa is to drown all differences for the sake of Allāh and love for the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) who is our only leader and to whom we owe a pledge of loyalty. Then only can we play a very glorious role for Islam and the country at large. Every Muslim will then be a flag-bearer of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). *This is the only way.*

Carry the message to every Muslim home: “*United we stand, divided we fall,*” and the fall will be such that the very name of Islam will be wiped off the face of this country. Finally, adopt the motto in which Islam started and flourished: “Love for Allāh and love for fellow human beings.” And Almighty Allāh will bless you in a manner that you cannot imagine.

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 14

The Age of Doubt

The issues raised are comprehensive and relate not only to the Muslims of South Africa, but to the whole world, even where majority Muslim communities are to be found. Certain fundamental factors have come into existence in this modern age and have influenced the Muslim community. The present-day thinkers all agree that the previous age was the “age of faith” and the present age is the “age of doubt”. What are the reasons that this age should be called the “age of doubt”? What caused humanity to follow the path of faithlessness?

The Muslim community, especially the rising generation of Muslims, is in a state of doubt and confusion. Our Muslim youth are caught in the cross-fire of ultra-conservatism and ultra-modernism. Conservatism is a virtue, but when it is taken beyond limits, it becomes a vice. The entire universe is conservative only fundamentally and it is changing all the time. Even humanity, though it remains fundamentally the same throughout the ages, has to undergo changes. The philosophy of change is based on the pursuit for knowledge – to fly on the wings of knowledge to even greater heights, the quest for discovery, and to probe all those resources which are here. Consequently, the material life of mankind changed because of the ambition of the human being. This ambition which is physical in its foundation has resulted in changes in the economic pattern. People adopted one type of economic pattern and replaced it with another.

The pursuit of knowledge has led to inventions or discoveries of

material things and instruments, which have now changed the lives of human beings. When the first human beings invented the sled to carry their belongings from one place to another, it was a big step forward. Then the wheel was invented and used in the car. This process continued until today when the human is able to build spaceships and travel to the moon.

Human probings bring about technological changes. Modern sociologists say: "Technological changes bring about a change in cultural mentality, and this brings about a psychological change." This change in the psyche brings a change in focus towards the metaphysical reality until the very beliefs of human beings are changed. Religion is changed on the basis of change in the technological pattern. That has been the process.

Consequently, conservation is a virtue, but taken beyond its limits, it is a very big vice! The world in which we live is conservative – it has conserved its fundamental characteristics but it has also changed and is continuously changing. Therefore, there has to be the harmonious blending of preserving the fundamentals and always being ready to change the secondaries. If you want to conserve everything, then this "caravan of life" is moving all the time and its law will become "everyone to himself and devil takes the hindmost."

Those who are efficient, who have the energy to go ahead and the will to move, they move ahead. Those who want to remain stationary, they are trampled under the feet of the crowd!

Life is movement and everything in this universe is moving all the time. But, in our Muslim community the pietists have decided that we should remain stationary and become negative and proclaim everything to be *ḥarām*! The narrow-minded pietists believe that we should live in a shell and remain stationary! We have lived in this shell for the last one hundred and fifty years and the consequence is that although we are seven hundred million in terms of numbers, we are not worth seventy cents in the international affairs of the world.

Despite the fact that Muslims are in strategic positions all over the

world, it is the most impotent community in the world! It has no say in international affairs and other communities are planning all the time how to swallow us. We have become like the ostrich which buries its head in the ground and feels that all is well. We have built up superstitions and shells around ourselves and around Islam so that the light of Islam may not penetrate those false barriers. We have changed Islam into a cult.

And a cult is a combination of certain dogmas, rituals and some ethical principles. We do not go beyond that cult. Even an ethical principle like morality has been divorced from religion in our society. I don't know about your community, but I know about the Indian community where I was born in and the Pakistani community where I live. For a good Muslim, morality has no meaning today. Pious Muslims with all the paraphernalia of a good Muslim: long beards with long flowing robes called *ḥājīs* hold the whole market of Pakistan in their hands. If one wants to buy pure honey, for example, one rather buys the imported honey to get the real thing, although it is also produced in Pakistan. But one cannot get pure Pakistan honey! I mention things that are very simple but far-reaching. Go to the matrimonial courts in Pakistan and see what Muslims think of their religion now. Compared to the Qur'ān and *sunnah*, religion to them has nothing to do with morality.

For instance, a traveller may be pious and marry two wives who will each live in a different town, but, none of the two wives will know about each other. He will have children by both wives and none of them will know that they are sisters and brothers of one another. The father dies and these children meet and marry one another – of course, not knowing that they are brothers and sisters!

We can go on and probe what this malady is that we are suffering from. The parents, even well-meaning parents, have time only for earning money and counting it. This has been cursed in the Qur'ān and such people are condemned as people of hell. They go five times a day to mosque to perform their *ṣalāh*, but when they come home, they have no time for their children and their wives. I have seen good hardworking Muslims who become multi-millionaires through business.

But the children receive no affection nor teachings from their parents. The father thinks that everything can be purchased with money.

In my community, you get *zakāh* from the rich *hājī* or *Mawlana*; but when you tell him that *zakāh* cannot be spent for the *madrasah* teachers or for constructing the *madrasah* building, he would say; “Take it or leave it! I have only *zakāh* to pay.”

Ramaḍān is the month of charity and these so-called “wealthy, religious, pious Muslims” will calculate their *zakāh*. They will let their managers get $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ *rupee* pieces, one and ten *rupee* notes. In Karachi and Colombo, these wealthy merchants will sit at a table with this heap of money in front of them. Then a whole army of undignified Muslim beggars in dirty and tattered clothes will swarm the market places of Karachi and Colombo. This scene continues for the whole month.

When a beggar comes to them, he will be given a $\frac{1}{2}$ *rupee*; if the beggar complains, he is given a one *rupee* note. If he does not move, finally he is given a ten *rupee* note. The merchant considers it *ḥarām* to pay beyond ten *rupees*! This is the way we treat *zakāh*, which was the social welfare tax of Islam!

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) established for the first time in known history, the welfare state. No Muslim community can be called an Islamic community or state unless that community or state undertakes to guarantee the basic needs of every member of that community. This is the law of welfare community that was founded! It was not a community of *Qarūns* on the one hand and the dumb driven cattle of the dumb driven masses in the other hand. It was not that community which we find in Pakistan and elsewhere !

The community which the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) built was on the basis of social justice. He said that everything which a Muslim possesses, belongs to Allāh (swt) and not to that person. The Holy Qur’ān states:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَىٰ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ
بِأَنَّهُ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ

Allāh has purchased from the believers their life and their wealth, in lieu of deferred payment, the Jannah.

(Q 9:111)

Whatever good you do now, you will receive the *Jannah*. No businessman would like to do that kind of business here! In the first instance, Allāh (swt) is the Real Owner, Creator and Maintainer of everything. The secondary ownership that we acquire has to be surrendered to Allāh (swt) in order to be a believer. How many of us are there who are doing this? In Pakistan, if a wealthy man gives you something for a *madrasah* or anything else, he will give it with *zakāh* money only. And beggars cannot be choosers!

These are the spiritual leaders, behind whom we pray! They have made their '*ulamā*' (in Pakistan) beggars. If an '*ālim*' wants to open up an institution, he has to go from door to door and if the merchant wishes, he will see the '*ālim*' – otherwise not.

With all this charity that they do they have sunk to the lowest and deviated from the Holy Qur'ān and *sunnah*. For example, they do business with human beings in this way: the lower the investment, the higher must be the profit or dividend. Consequently, they conduct business this way with Allāh (swt) also. They would say : "Mawlana Saheb, if I give so much for such a cause, how much *thawāb* will I get?" And the Mawlana Saheb, who is under the thumb of the merchant, tells him all sorts of nonsense to please him. He doesn't tell him outright: "You can't do business with Allāh (swt) like that and whatever you have been entrusted with is an *amānah*. Do you want to use Allāh's *amānah* and make business with Him!"

Another aspect of trading with Allāh (swt) is: make so much *tasbīh* on a particular night and get so much *thawāb*. Obtain the *Jannah* with zero investment! To read certain things a thousands times a night is

easy. But we cannot build Islam's prestige and glory on this basis. What is the real Islam?

Let me tell you about the lady saint, Rābi'a al-Baṣrī (ra). She was absorbed all the time in the remembrance of Allāh (swt). One day she was seen running along the road, a bowl with fire in the one hand and a container with water in the other. When Sayyidinā Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (ra), her spiritual companion, asked her what the problem was, she said: "People worship Allāh (swt) either out of desire for *Jannah* or out of fear for *Jahannam*. I wish to burn that *Jannah* with this fire and extinguish that *Jahannam* with this water, so that people may worship Allāh (swt) out of love for Him and no other reason." This is Islam! Not this debit, credit business, because the Holy Qur'ān says:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ

The believers are those who love Allāh more than anything else.

(Q 2:165)

This love is the real connection that has to be established between the believer and Allāh (swt). I am sad to learn that the conditions here are probably the same as in my country, Pakistan, where our errors have brought the evil day to us. If in your minority community, conditions are what they appear to be, then allow me to say as a humble servant of Allāh that things can only worsen and we will remain at the mercy of the superpowers.

If any one of the *kāfir* powers wants to annihilate a Muslim community anyday, it can do it. We are at their mercy for we have no answer to their atom bombs. Consequently, you'll find that in the politics of Muslim countries, i.e. those which have Muslim governments, are not free to do as they want. The superpowers always come forward and give a command. The Soviet Union wanted East Pakistan to be taken from West Pakistan, and it had to happen. The superpowers want the state of Israel to remain as a dagger in the heart of the Arab world, and Muslims can't do anything.

Why? What is wrong with the Muslims? Muslims may worship Allāh

(swt) more than other communities worship their God, but their religiosity has absolutely no meaning where material forces are concerned. We may worship as many times as we want but it is no anti-dote for our slavery to the superpowers! I am referring to Muslim governments who are slaves of superpowers because they have to obey their orders. The main fault with Muslims is that they have lagged behind in the field of science and technology. Disunity is there in other communities as well. Lack of good morals is to be found in other communities too, but there is one thing which Muslims lagged behind to the extent that they are now considered to be a primitive community. Japan, China, Europe and America are considered to be advanced communities. Are they advanced in spirituality, humanity or morality? No, but they are advanced in the material instruments of domination. Why has it happened?

Here, the most tragic thing has taken place. If you study the history of physical science, you will find that the founder of the modern scientific era is the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). *He* is the founder, *not* the west or anyone else. Let me refer you to the history of science by R. Briffault. In his book, *The Making of Humanity* he says: "Science before Muḥammad was pre-scientific ..." It was he who gave the scientific method of inquiry, without which no advance in the field of science would have been possible. Of course, this may sound unbelievable, but let me explain further. The methods of inquiry are two: deductive logic and inductive logic. Before the advent of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) humanity knew only the deductive method – and on the basis of this method, no progress is possible in the field of physical science. It is the inductive method of inquiry which brings progress in the field of physical science. This inductive method was given for the first time by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), as given in the Holy Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*.

In our conception of an *‘ālim* or *Mawlana*, there is even no resemblance between, for example, Imām Abū Ḥanīfā, Imām Ghazzālī, and so on. Returning to the point in question, read any book on philosophy of science and you'll find the three principles on which physical science is based: *unity of mankind*, *unity of nature* and *unity of knowledge*.

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) taught these principles! What is the first message

he gave because there must be a system in the divine scheme, it cannot be meaningless. The first message from the Holy Qur'an:

أَقْرَأْ بِأَسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ
أَقْرَأْ وَالَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

Read in the name of your Lord who created – created man out of a germ-cell. Read – for your Lord is the Most Bountiful One who has taught the use of the pen – taught man what he did not know!

(Q 96:1–5)

These five verses deal with two things – the psychology for the quest of knowledge and the technique for the quest of knowledge.

The first message came for 'ilm. The message given to Muslims is that the function of this *ummah* will be to unearth all the treasures of knowledge that are buried in the different civilisations of the world: to preserve, to classify and to rectify all the different types of knowledge and advance the course of knowledge. This is the function of this community as laid down in the first message that came. Unfortunately, now this community is a community of illiterates. In Pakistan the Muslims are 85% illiterate the 15% who are literate only 2% of them are educated. To be literate is one thing but to be educated is another. And this is supposed to be one of the most advanced Muslim communities of the world.

If I come forward and deliver the message of Islam, people regard it as nonsense, although it is based on the truth! Why did Allāh (swt) send the first message about the psychology for the quest of knowledge and the technique for the quest of knowledge? It means that the foundation of this *ummah* was being laid and its basis is 'ilm, (knowledge). At another place in the Holy Qur'an we are told:

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ

Allāh will elevate those who cultivate faith and knowledge.

(Q 58:11)

Here the Qur'ān mentions *'ilm* – *all knowledge* – not only the knowledge of a few books of *fiqh* or *tafsīr*, but also mathematics, physics, chemistry, medicine, etc. All knowledge, not only *'ilm al-dīn*. The cultivation of all knowledge is *'ibādah*, the real mission of this *ummah*.

None of the founders of faith said what the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said:

فَضْلُ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِي عَلَى أَدْنَاكُمْ

The superiority of a person who pursues knowledge over a person who remains engaged in devotional exercises, is like my superiority over the meanest amongst you.

Here is the teacher of real religion. Islam is *al-dīn*, “the way of life” and the concept of Islam is different to what we'll find in other religions. The emphasis in other religions is dogma or rituals but in Islam it's the contrary. Read the Qur'ān and find out what *dīn* is.

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ
عَلَيْهَا لَا بُدَّ لِي لَخَلَقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينَ الْقِيَمُ وَلَكِنْ
أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

To live your life according to the nature which Allāh has made you and the nature around you. To live your life in conformity with nature, that is the right religion, but most human beings do not understand this.

(Q 30:30)

There is a wrong notion that *dīn* consists of rituals and dogmas, but the Qur'ān negates this assertion. The way of life is to live life according to nature, the nature on which Allāh (swt) constituted the human being. Therefore we should not be amazed if we hear that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) gave this importance to the pursuit of knowledge – which he did not give to optional devotional worship when he said:

حَبْرُ الْعَالَمِ أَغْظَمُ مِنْ دَمِّ الشَّهِيدِ

The ink of the scholar is holier than the blood of the martyr.

No founder of religion ever said these words, for the place of the martyr in religion is very high. He also commanded his followers:

الْحِكْمَةُ الضَّالَّةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ

Every piece of wisdom or knowledge is the property of the believer.

Every believer should get hold of whatever knowledge and wherever he may find it. However, we are living in a shell and the consequence is that our rising generations all over the world are revolting against Islam because our Islam solves no problem at all, according to them. If the love that the elders have for Islam is not transmitted to the youth and if we remain in that shell, we will lose our generation – our Muslim youth. I have been informed about what is happening in Lenasia: how the *madāris* are starving and the manner in which the elders, who have lots of money, but cold-shoulder their duties. Another point is that the youth also earn a lot of money and don't care about their lowly paid teachers. If ten teachers are required only one is employed because money is not to be spent for this job.

Problems are emerging in this township and we are simply sleeping over the issues as to what is going to happen tomorrow. If a girl wears a mini-skirt, the *fatwa* goes out immediately. But it does not work because the poison has gone into the minds and there is no cure! Remember, prevention is better than cure. What you have to do is to build up the fortress for Islam amongst the youth so that they may develop into better human beings than the youth of other communities and be able to show the torch of guidance to others.

But, we don't want to do our duties, we don't want to work for the cause of Islam. Money is more important. If we die as millionaires we feel that it is good while we just give a pittance to Islam as it is given

to a beggar! Islam is a beggar at our door! People do not have the mind, nor the heart to understand Islam and to serve Allāh (swt). They do not stop to think that whatever they have, have been given to them by Allāh (swt) only and that He who gave it also has the power to take it away. They don't understand that if this community is not built into a proper Muslim community with the highest ideals and in the noblest fashion, then this community will not survive as a Muslim community.

It is a minority community and will be swallowed by other more dynamic ones. I do not know why people do not see to the problems of *madāris* and why it is at such an inferior level in this country. Obviously, the first problem is to teach our young children. The more important problem is what to teach them when they go to the college and are exposed to many secular theories which create doubt in their minds such as the theory of Darwin. There is no arrangement at this level in this country. There is not even a single person who can tackle this problem. What I observed during my tour of South Africa is that what should be done, is not being done.

It is only a half-hearted measure and in the meantime we are gradually losing our youth. We are presenting Islam to the youth in a manner in which he finds that most of his problems remain unsolved. Consequently, he has to beg at other doors while the only way open to him is that of western education. If you don't give the youth western education, you are going to kill them materially. If you give them that education they might deviate. So your community is between the devil and the deep sea! And you'll have to answer for it. Those who have the money and the influence will have to answer on the Day of Judgement!

My dear brothers and sisters, the Islam that was given by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is dynamic and revolutionary. Islam in the fashion we have it today, in the form of a cult, is something meaningless. Allāh (swt) has laid down the law for Muslims, that they should try to build this world first and the next world after. We have been asked to pray:

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً

O Lord, give us the best of this world and then the best of the next world.

(Q 2:201)

But we put the cart before the horse. If we become religious, we think only of the other world. The other world is real and we must work for it because the spiritual life is the highest life, but we must keep the logical sequence intact. We must build this world first and then the next. The Holy Qur'an tells us:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

You are the best community that has been raised for mankind and you enjoin what is right and forbid (eradicate) what is evil and you believe in Allāh.

(Q 3:110)

Think about this verse, for this is the mission of this Muslim community. Are we doing this job – to establish good and eradicate evil from all over the world is a much greater job than eradicating evil from our own community. Even of this we have no consciousness because we suffer from this malady and remain in a state of “piety complex”.

Very ordinary things in Islam, we are told, are the most important. We look down upon one another. If a man does not grow a beard he is labled a *fāsiq*. Growing a beard for the sake of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is a sacred act, but there is an added responsibility. After keeping the beard, never commit the slightest crime or sin, otherwise you'll be insulting the memory of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and that is something Allāh (swt) will never forgive you.

We should turn our backs on all this sophisticated foolishness in the

name of Islam, and go back to that original Islam of the Qur'ān and the life of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). That is the only way. Here Islam is dynamic, progressive and such that, Muslims are born to be supreme.

وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

You will be superior if you are believers.

(Q 3:139)

And if we are not superior in this world, then we are not real believers. This is a clear proclamation of Allāh. You will be superior in technology, science, art, peace and war, politics and economics and in every other branch of knowledge! But, Muslims today are the most inferior! Are we believers?

We should take stock of the entire situation and teach our youth and create those agencies whereby they can acquire that real Islam. And the real Islam is so fascinating, charming and beautiful, that if it is offered to anyone, that person will never refuse it. That is our duty and the only cure for our present malady. At the moment we are at the crossroads. We are at the stage of being annihilated as Muslims. Persons by the name of Ya'qūb, Ḥasan and 'Umar may walk on the roads, but there will be no Islam if we don't wake up in time.

May Allāh (swt) enable us to be true to Him and His Beloved Prophet (ﷺ) and the Qur'ān and leave all our foolish ideas wherever they collide with what is given in the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*. Turn back to that source of life, and *inshā'*-Allāh this small community in South Africa will be a beacon of light and provide guidance to other communities. Our function is to be a beacon of light towards a higher life; godliness, absolute justice, truth, beauty, wisdom and holiness. We have to become this! We have the money and manpower in the community, we only need to rediscover ourselves as to *what* we are and *what* we ought to become.

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 15

Message to the Muslim Youth

The youth is the backbone of every community and the future rests with the youth. When we look at the history of Islam and Muslims, we see a panorama of events. Many of these events make us feel happy, but events that have occurred over the last two centuries make us feel sad. These events reflect certain weaknesses in the Muslim community and the youth are posing critical questions. These critical questions compel those who love Islam to analyse the negative factors which plague Muslims all over the world.

It is a law of history, ordained by Almighty Allāh (swt) that every ideological community starts with certain values. From these values emerge certain norms, then follow certain principles and then emerge certain laws, and finally, under those laws emerge definite rules, regulations and practices. A community adopts a philosophy of life in its pristine purity and depending on the vitality and cohesion of the value system, the community moves forward and wins laurels. But what happens after that?

All values and ideals stand in need of certain institutions for their preservation. Even in Islam, for it is a comprehensive philosophy and code of life. However, after long periods institutions become more important and the values are forgotten. The soul is more important because it survives the body. When the values and the spirit is forgotten, then those institutions become “stereo-typed”, moribund, static and stagnant.

On the other hand, the vested interests which emerge in a community come into conflict with one another, not only through politics but also through conflicting sects in religion. You'll find that Islam started as a full-blooded, dynamic and progressive movement for the service of mankind, as we have been told in the Holy Qur'ān:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

You are the best ideological group established for the service of mankind and your function to command the establishment of all that is good in the entire humanity and to eradicate every type of evil and to do this as soldiers of Allāh.

(Q 3:110)

This must not be done in the name of a particular race, nation or community. Neither should it be on the basis of those material distinctions, which divide human beings. It must be done only as soldiers of Allāh, before Whom all human beings are one family. With this universal concept this community emerged not to dominate or persecute other human communities, nor to commit any injustice, but only to be a servant of the entire mankind. Those who studied history know very well that the greatest miracle of mankind is the rise of Islam. No other religion or philosophy of life emerged in this fashion. The famous historian Thomas Carlyle says: "It appears as if the sands of Arabia were transformed into an explosive powder and there was a blast, and it illumined the entire horizon of mankind, dispelling darkness and spreading light."

The speed at which the Islamic revolution took place was not by force of arms but rather by the power of the spirit. It was the force of the value system of Islam, which was responsible for the miraculous success of the Muslims. Within one century they could fix the banner of Islam at the shores of the Pacific on the one hand and the shores of the Atlantic on the other! Wherever they went, they went as messengers of peace and progress, as angels of mercy for downtrodden

people. They were embraced by all communities with open arms as saviours and not as conquerors. However, there is a law, which is always in operation in the history of mankind to which I already referred. Wealth and power corrupts. In the process of expansion and the building up of the Islamic empire with such a rapid pace, Muslims gained both power and wealth, and the corrupting influence of these developments on the upper strata of Muslim society soon showed. Conditions were changing during the period of the Ummayyads, and later during the rule of the ‘Abbāsids.

The seat of the Ummayyad empire was Dasmascus and the seat of the ‘Abbāsīd empire was Baghdad. Gradually that Islamic social order started to change. Religion was divorced from the state. The holistic, unifying principle of *tawḥīd* was violated and not regarded as sacred and resulted in many evils.

Economics, politics, sociology, philosophy, psychology and all the other branches of knowledge are not considered by the contemporary Muslims as being within the purview of Islam. Islam today is confined to certain rituals and a very great misunderstanding has been created about Islam through the compulsion of certain historical forces.

In order to be a good Muslim, the great misconception is that one must refrain from economic policies, administration policies, and other secular activities. Even in Muslim countries, Islam is only the religion of the mosque and there are only certain rituals that have to be fulfilled in order for one to be a good Muslim, whatever one may do otherwise. Our history is self-evident of the enormous damage this perception has caused the Muslim community.

An ideology starts with a value system, but if the value system is forgotten and vested interests emerge, people become confused and wrangle about the doctrines. To interpret them is called the dialectical philosophy or *‘ilm al-kalām* which replaces theology. The main schools of dialectical theology are the ‘Asharite and the Mu’tazilite theological schools that emerged during the ‘Abbāsīd period. The adherents of these schools of thought were in constant conflict but all claiming to be faithful Muslims on the basis of their schools. So, *‘ilm al-kalām*

substituted religion or theology but then it degenerated into subdivisions of Bareilvi, Deobandi or the Tabligh Jama'at. But subdivisions tear the Muslim community into shreds and rip the hearts of Muslims apart and bring in *kufir* on all sides. Despite the fact that the Muslim community arose on the principle of *tawhīd* (unity) it is the most divided community of the world today because of the vicious chain of suspicion and inner wrangling. Unity is challenged on religious and tribal grounds. My brothers and sisters, especially my young friends, how can we survive in this modern world as a community in a country where we are a hopeless minority? What is wrong and what is the way out?

I have given you the historical perspective that you may be able to trace the causes of our present degradation and degeneration. It is not for the sake of weeping and wailing, but for the sake of charting our course for the future if we want to live as Muslims and survive as a community. Let us return to the beginning – that Islam which is based on a value system. The opinion of the so-called religious, pious Muslims about Islam is that it is based on five principles: *kalimah al-shahādah*, *ṣalāh*, *ṣawm*, *zakāh* and *hajj*; but nothing beyond that. The Holy Prophet (ṣ) said:

بُنِيَ الْإِسْلَامُ عَلَى خَمْسٍ

Islam has been founded on five things.

To build a foundation without the structure would be considered to be abnormal, yet we have been doing exactly that. The religious Muslims are satisfied that they pray five times a day, fast, and practice the other basic principles and then feel that they have obtained a passport to heaven and are in the best category of Muslims. Certainly not! We will be asked by Almighty Allāh on the Day of Judgement: “Did My Messenger not tell you that these are only the foundations and that you had to build the whole structure of Islam on it? Islam which is constituted of the moral, social, political, international sides of life? Why didn’t you build that? Get away, you are defaulters!”

What else can it be? If you give a contract to a contractor to build a

house and you are presented with the foundations only and the contractor demands his money will you not respond in the same way Allāh (swt) would respond? So, we will be told the same thing on the Day of Judgement. If you try to understand Islam scientifically, we'll find that according to the *kalimah al-shahādah* there are two qualities that should be present in a person. According to the *fiqh*, the *shahādah* is the first but according to *ḥikmah* (wisdom) the *shahādah* comes third!

The first principle is *ṣidq* – absolute truthfulness – in thought, word and deed. The second principle is *amānah* – absolute trustworthiness. In the life of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) all the inherent qualities of a Prophet were present since birth. Prophets are born and not made, therefore Allāh (swt) introduced him first as *al-Ṣiddīq* and then as *al-Amīn*. Hence, the Arabs accepted him as such. Then only was he commissioned to invite the people to Allāh. A person who is not truthful, who is not *amīn*, what relationship can his dirty heart have with Allāh? With what tongue can he say:

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

I bear witness that there is no god but Allāh.

May I remind you of an incident of a great *ṣūfī*, *Sayyidinā Junayd* (ra). One day he was passing by the mosque when the *mu'adhdhīn* was calling the *adhān*, and when he recited ... This great *ṣūfī* caught hold of the *mu'adhdhīn*'s neck and said: "You are a liar."

The *mu'adhdhīn* was stunned. Some wise man who was nearby came to the rescue of the *mu'adhdhīn* and said: "Sir, he is not a liar because he believes the Holy Prophet (ṣ) had direct vision or *mushāhadah* and is the direct witness of Allāh. He is saying this on that foundation and therefore is not a liar."

To say the *shahādah* with your tongue but without understanding the implications may make you a Muslim according to *fiqh*, but to say the *shahādah* all the time without knowing what it means! No court of law will accept evidence unless the witness was personally there to

observe the event. So how can we say *ash-hadu an-lā ilāaha illal-lāh*. It is because we have not proceeded from the starting point of values.

The two basic human values given in Islam before affirming the *kalimat al-shahādah* are *ṣidq* and *amānah*, or *truthfulness* and *trustworthiness*. These values come first.

A third factor which comes before the affirmation of the *shahādah* is the burning desire in the heart of every person to lead a successful life. That burning desire to search the true way will transform his personality and lead to a successful life. Then alone can he benefit by it, otherwise not.

Most of us are living in a world of our own imaginations where we are not able to recognise ourselves, our obligations and what we ought to become. My dear brothers and young friends, today Islam has assumed the form of a cult. It is not accepted as a philosophy of life. A cult is a combination of certain dogmas and certain rituals and a few ethical principles. Of course, in our cult those ethical principles are non-existent, we have only dogmas! For example, if we stand up and say *salām* (to honour the Prophet) we are Muslim and if we don't stand up we are not Muslim! These definitions – forgive me my frankness – are possible because we treat Islam as if it is a cult. It is a sort of magic wand. For example, in Pakistan the question was raised why Pakistan was defeated in the war against India. After all, however weak the Pakistanis might be – we believe in the *kalimah* and the others are *kāfir*. Why did Allāh (swt) not give us victory? There was not any such sanction or guarantee given in the *ḥadīth* or Qur'ān. Almighty Allāh has made no promise to the the Muslim. Allāh has made a promise only to the *mu'min* (the believer) but are we really believers? We have been told in the Holy Qur'ān that we will succeed in all undertakings on every front of life:

وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

Do not lose heart against the heaviest trials and never be in a state of grief, for you are bound to succeed if you are believers!

(Q 3:139)

“If you are a *mu'min*” and who is a *mu'min*? *Mu'min* means one who believes in Allāh (swt) and in the beloved Prophet (ﷺ) as his guide. A person who believes that fire burns, if asked to put his hand in the fire will refuse because he has that *īmān* that the fire will burn him. This is *īmān* or belief because you won't put your hand in the fire.

What is this *īmān*? If I say: “I bear witness that there is one Allāh,” what does it imply? Who is Allāh? Allāh is He Who created me and controls my life and the entire universe and Who is All Knowing and present everywhere. Allāh is He who has created me with a certain mission and made me into a spiritual and moral being and Who laid down the Law that on the Day of Judgement every action of mine will be judged accordingly. Allāh has forbidden and ordered me to do certain things. Am I really a believer if I continue to violate with impunity the commands of Allāh (swt)?

The belief which I have is only a formal belief and not a real or genuine belief. Therefore the Qur'ān has made a distinction between *muslim* and *mu'min*. The verse from the Holy Qur'ān is:

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ ءَامَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ
قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ

These Arabs say: we are believers, say to them: you are not believers at all, you have only become members of the Muslim community. Because your condition is such that īmān has not entered your hearts.
(Q 49:14)

And this problem of *īmān* entering the hearts, *Allāhu Akbar*. Do not misunderstand me, for I am going to say something very delicate. A *ḥadīth* relates that there will be a period in human history when Muslims will be downtrodden and in a state of utter degradation and degeneration. During this period, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The ‘ulamā’ of my people will be the worst among God’s creation on the face of the earth!”

أَشْرُ الْخَلَائِقِ تَحْتَ عَدِيءِ السَّمَاءِ

The companions asked the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) how such a situation can come about and he answered:

They will make beautiful speeches, they will recite the Qur'ān beautifully, but their *īmān* will not go down their throats!

Thus, it is a problem of the *īmān* being internalised. How can I, an 'ālim, come before you and deliver lectures but I do not possess that *īmān*? I will then be deceiving you and will be in the category of the worst of Allāh's creation on the face of the earth. What about the general Muslims? The morals or the commandments given in the Holy Qur'ān and all those human values are not cared for. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was asked who can be considered to be the most perfect in *īmān*, and he replied:

أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا

The most perfect among believers is that person who is most perfect in his moral life.

He did not mention prayer, fasting, charity or pilgrimage! He mentioned *al-akhlāq* (moral conduct). But do we care for it? In Pakistan there are so many big *hājīs* who do black-marketing all year round and buy tickets on bonus vouchers at two or three times the cost for performing 'umrah or the *hajj* once every year. What type of Islam is this? Is it the Islam of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) who says that a person who speaks one lie, his prayers will not be acceptable for forty days to come! And speaking a lie is only damaging one's own prestige. Those who commit social sins and who hate their fellow human beings and refuse to be of service to the community are committing social sins which are of a very serious nature. All these social sins are rife and we remain contented. If I observe the external paraphernalia of having a beard of a particular size, a *kurta* of another size and a turban of a particular variety and pray five times a day, I should not be questioned about my morals. To question is to be outside the purview of Islam! What Islam is this?

My brothers, sisters and young friends, the picture of Islam which you have inherited is not the genuine picture of Islam, and therefore I do not feel hurt when you come to me and present your doubts to me. The age of youth is the age of innocence. Perversion grows as age grows. So in your innocence you seem bewildered by what is happening. You hear that Islam is the best, the divine religion and that this community is spread all over the world, but this religion is insulted and gets a beating all the time! The world Muslim community is not progressing but is reactionary and dependent on others who are non-Muslim, for everything. What has happened to this community? What sense is there to assume that Islam is the best yet the Muslims are the weakest? This creates confusion in the minds of the youth.

The point I wish to make is that the Islam which has been given to us in the Holy Qur'an and the life and example of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is a philosophy of life which is magnanimous, broadminded, enlightened, progressive, dynamic and revolutionary! The course of history has disfigured Islam and it became a cult. In this cult there are things which are Islamic: the *kalimah al-shahādah*, prayer, fasting and everything else that may be Islamic has its value. These rituals are obligatory but have been cut off from the rest of Islam. If you cut off the feet of a person that person will not be able to walk. If you remove part of the brain of a person that person will not be able to function in life. This is what we have done in history.

I wish to appeal to all Muslims everywhere to rediscover the whole of Islam; that beautiful harmonious blending of all values and dimensions of life. Allow me to emphasise another important point. Islam believes that the gradation of values is accepted in all fields of human life. I refer here to the principle of priorities in order of importance. The Islamic philosophy of life is: *No sound mind without a sound body*. Therefore it is our sacred, religious Islamic obligation to keep our bodies and mind sound to ensure a sound moral life. We have to build ourselves intellectually on a sound basis. Both the cognitive (knowing or perceiving) and connotative sides have to develop in a healthy fashion in order that we may lead a healthy moral life. Sound spirituality with sound morality is the goal of Islam. In order to attain sound spirituality we will have to build a sound moral life, mind and body.

Another principle of priority is that the individual cannot live in a vacuum. Every individual is always a part of a larger group. For example, one is part of a family, then the community, the town, city, or country. In fact, one is part of the entire human family and finally, part of the universe. So, if a human being does not have a social perspective and builds himself as a social being in the way the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*, advocates, he may be a failure. Thus all these dimensions have to be taken into consideration. To observe the obligatory rituals of praying, fasting, charity and pilgrimage must be done, but remember, life is a unity.

All these have to be built up with one central idea – Allāh (swt)! We have been told in the Holy Qur'ān (Q 53:42) that every activity be it intellectual, moral, social, aesthetical or spiritual should be God-orientated. This is the philosophy of life which we find in the Holy Qur'ān and the *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (ṣ). But we also find constant deviations from it until Islam was reduced to a small cult and lost its other dimensions. If Islam remains in this state, remember we have no future, because that is the way to death and annihilation, rather than progress, life and survival. Therefore my message is: *return to the value system of Islam as given in the Qur'ān and sunnah*. Leave all your pre-conceived opinions and inherited misunderstandings if you wish to revive yourself and live in this country as an honourable community. In this connection the obligation of the youth is much greater than those who have already passed the age of youth and are now waiting to go to the other world. The youth are the leaders of tomorrow. The period of youth is the period of preparation. As Muslims, to prepare for the challenges of life, you will have to concentrate on the studies of the Qur'ān and *sunnah* to come to the original message of Islam in its completeness and wholeness.

I hope that this message is not taken lightly. This is a message given to you fearlessly, sincerely and only for the sake of Allāh (swt). May He enable you to capture this message, imbibe it and take it up. The world belongs only to those who are courageous and who do not believe in escapism.

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 16

Islam vs. Communism

In the Name of the One True God,
the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

There are two ways of looking at Islam versus Communism. One is the academic aspect, which is how far Islam agrees or disagrees with Communism, its tenets and its outlook. The second aspect is how far Muslims are in alliance with Communism.

As far as the academic problem is concerned regarding how far Islam and Communism agree with one another, I might say at the very outset that they cannot agree. As we very well know, the founder of Communism is Karl Marx and his book *Das Kapital* is the foundation of Communism. Although Communism claims to be a socio-economic ideology, Karl Marx began his philosophy of dialectic materialism and then applied it to the social phenomena. It is only in the latter part of his book that he comes to those problems, which are actually socio-economic. But Karl Marx had a history behind him.

It is not Karl Marx who established materialism as a way of life but those thinkers who preceded him. Charles Darwin set the ball rolling. He presented his hypothesis of mechanical causation to dispel the notion of God. This hypothesis was given by him not out of objective consideration, but out of subjective demands which he felt were there at the time. He wanted to do away with the hypothesis of God and consequently, he brought forth the hypothesis of “mechanical

causation” which he applied in the field of biology.

It took the form of the principle of transmutation. This theory was adopted later by Husserl and Spencer who applied his materialistic theory in the field of sociology. John Stewart Mill applied it in the field of ethics and law – and Feuerbach applied it in the field of metaphysics. Finally, Karl Marx came but I do think he was more honest and thorough than his predecessors.

They tried to sail in two boats, whereas he tried to sail in one. In that regard he was sincere. The conditions which prevailed in Europe at that time, such as social injustice and other evils demanded a reaction to remedy the situation. Karl Marx took the opportunity and thought it honest on his part not only to stand up against capitalism, but also against all those forces which he felt were supporting capitalism. I think that it was one of the main causes which made him anti-God and anti-religion.

The human mind does not always work very well in a vacuum. It is very difficult, if not impossible for human beings to ignore their emotions or environmental stimuli. However great a thinker a person might be, that person is affected by those developments. Karl Marx’s philosophy started with dialectic materialism and he regarded philosophical materialism as the “Utopia” which should be established in every walk of human life and not merely as an academic pursuit. Thus, he took the idealism (the dialectical or logical argumentation method) of Hegel and turned it upside down. Marx’s theory of dialectical materialism offers no room for God or any supra-rational moral values. These are higher values for which Muslims, Christians and Jews stand for, thus there can never be any harmony between communism and Islam.

Islam stands definitely and positively for the purest form of monotheism and builds its entire philosophy on the belief in one God. Islam is a thesis, communism is an anti-thesis. Islam has given the proper place to social justice as far as the social point of view is concerned. In *Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, chapter five of the Holy Qur’ān, we are expected to be just – even if it conflicts with our own interest and the interests of

our own family. We must even be just when dealing with our worst enemy. Unless human beings are treated with justice, there can be no proper godliness in Islam for godliness is justice. Islam distinguishes clearly between ritual piety and practical piety.

The Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* emphasise that love for God must correspond with love for fellow human beings. One cannot claim to love God and at the same time not do good to one's fellow human beings. Such a claim would be farcical and will not be accepted by God.

Islam was conscious of the fact that if basic human needs are not fulfilled, then the higher values would be impossible to attain. Thus, the Holy Prophet (ṣ) proclaimed:

تَارَ الْفُرْقَانُ يَكُونُ لَهُمُ الْكُفْرَ

Poverty, want and deprivation of basic needs here on the earth
can lead to infidelity to God.

I think that communism is the best proof of this. Unlike the capitalistic economy which encourages a concentration of wealth in a few, Islam is socialistic in its economic concept in the sense that it stands for the welfare and the good of the maximum number of human beings. Neither does Islam support the greed which supports this world order called capitalism.

Islam's egalitarian concept of a social order rests on the belief in God, and in an ethical basis of life. Materialism does not respect moral values, for if the world has not been created by God, then it would mean that the world has come into being by itself or by chance. It is only when we postulate God, then it is possible for us to believe that there is a plan and a purpose. If it has not been created by an Intelligent Being and it came into existence by chance or without any law, then this world is a chance order and a blind order and is then purely material and has no God.

According to modern thinkers human beings don't have a mind and a soul. If the world is purely physical and human beings merely

biological automatons or physical beings, what can be the ideal for them? We know very well that it is human nature to avoid pain and acquire pleasure. What type of pain and pleasure would a human being wish to acquire if he is only a biological automaton?

Naturally, that happiness which he would like to acquire would be sensuous pleasure. If that should be his ideal, then the moral sympathy for fellow beings falls to the ground. If I am a millionaire and I meet a fellow human being who is starving, and I give him one *dollar* to buy food and save his life, this would be considered to be an immoral act on the basis of the materialistic theory. According to this theory I am depriving myself of the opportunity of acquiring or purchasing the maximum amount of sensuous pleasure for myself.

Mind you, it has to be purchased for myself because there is no moral bond of unity amongst human beings. If all human beings come into this world by chance, enjoy and suffer by chance and die out by chance, then naturally there will be absolutely no moral bond of unity. A moral bond of unity only comes under the fatherhood of God. If God has created all human beings and all human beings are one family, then alone there is a moral bond of unity – otherwise not.

Under the materialistic theory there is no scope for all those moral values for which humanity stands. Consequently, the social life and the individual's life is enshrined in two mottoes under materialism. The individual is told to "eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." Naturally, if this world order is a blind process and my life is a blind process, then there is no other way out for me but to enjoy myself as best I can in the immediate present and not care about the future.

On the social level the motto which emerges from materialism is: "Everyone unto himself and the devil takes the hindmost". Similarly, in Darwin's theory of mechanical causation the maxim of 'survival of the fittest' is natural and, therefore, he was trying to do away with the idea of God. It is exactly the same. Darwin was, of course, speaking in terms of biology, but the same will have to be said in terms of morals, social organisation and social life.

Only those who are fit to live here in this world should be allowed to live, because the law of this world is a blind process. The only law that can be rationally adoptable in terms of these theories should be the law of the jungle. Why should we care for all the human values, like compassion, mercy, love, sincerity, genuineness, honesty and moral integrity? Logically there is no room for that.

From the point of view of expediency there may be room, but expediency is always on shifting ground and cannot be the rule of life. If expediency is made the rule of life, then there can be no healthy social order because there is no healthy communication on principles. My expediency may be different to that of X, Y or Z and should be different because every human being is a mutually exclusive human being – an individual who is not part of another human being. Therefore, this materialistic philosophy is the very opposite of what Islam teaches. The only common ground between Islam and materialism is that the welfare of the ordinary person should be the concern of every human community. However, the methods that Islam and materialism adopt are diametrically opposed to one another.

Communism believes in the dictatorship of the proletariat which is actually the dictatorship of a select few. People are treated as robots and placed under the worst form of slavery – the slavery of those who from above dictate, downwards such as the Kremlin to the Soviet parties and then all over the Soviet Union. There is also no room for private enterprise or personal initiative. Everything is spoon-fed and if the daily bread is guaranteed under these conditions, I doubt very much that it is any achievement. Somehow, daily bread is guaranteed everywhere – even in a poor country like mine.

Of course, much can be done if we are more honest. We have absolutely no need to turn to Marxism because this philosophy turns life upside down. Marxism takes away all our values, our highest yearnings and ideals. There are more ways other than the daily bread which is guaranteed via the dole.

Islam wants us to accomplish its ideals by keeping spiritual and moral values intact. During the reign of the second *khalifah*, 'Umar (ra), the

social welfare department was perfected to the maximum degree. There were official records about every family in the empire – their needs, every birth and death. The state undertook to ensure that every human being who lived in the empire received his basic needs honourably.

Islam did that without inflicting that which Marxism has inflicted on the people. I find it very unfortunate that those who could have resisted its challenge – Christians, Jews and Muslims – who belong to one monotheistic family, behaved in a very wrong manner towards one another. The house is divided. The Muslim world has not been allowed to stand on its own feet and has been the playground of politicians for international politics and a sort of chess game. None of our states are allowed to freely act as Muslims. There are strings on all sides around our necks. Consequently, when injustice is being perpetrated in the Muslim world – as it is being done in the Middle East where America and Britain play a leading role – the Arabs have had to accept an alliance with the Soviet Union. It is not that they want to be communists – not at all! Look at Pakistan. When Pakistan came into existence, the U.S.A. came forward and we signed a treaty of alliance, but at the same time, the U.S.A. was wooing India – our enemy. At the time when India attacked us, America refused to help; they were not even prepared to supply any spare parts for the jets which they sold to us. Naturally, bombers cannot function without spare parts. So they abandoned us. If our soldiers and Muslim nation had not been steadfast, we would have been the slaves of India today. This was done to us by the so-called leader of the free world.

At that time, China, a communist country, offered help and acted as a shield for Pakistan – an Islamic country. It is not that Pakistan has gone to China or Soviet Union for protection freely. The western powers were treacherous towards Pakistan who had no other way. The politics of the Superpowers is based on expediency and that expediency always turns against the Muslims. The natural reaction would be that they would seek alliance elsewhere – for as you know, there are only two power blocks the communist block and the so-called democratic block.

If the democratic block is underhand with us, we have got to survive

and grab hold of any straw. So don't think that these Muslim countries which now appear to be in the orbit of the Marxist world are Marxist. No, they are not. The Muslim masses can never be Marxist. It may be that there are a few people who are at the helm of affairs or who have been de-Islamised or deculturalised or demoralised, but the heart of the Muslim world is sound. It depends on the power politics of the superpowers whether the east turns red or remains red and white or becomes anything else.

The same is the case on the African continent. As far as I know, a great injustice has been done to the Muslims on this continent by the western colonial powers, and they might also turn towards Marxism. Do you know that Africa is a continent where Muslims are a majority? Sixty percent is Muslim, and if this sixty percent becomes absolutely frustrated and finds that those who should be their natural allies are stabbing them in the back all the time, millions of Muslims of Africa will turn towards Marxism. But that does not mean changing Islam for communism; it will only be a fight for survival.

I hope that from this seminary their will emerge spiritual forces that will remain together and that this spiritual front should not be broken, otherwise the future will be Marxism.

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 17

Women in Islam

One of the aspects to be discussed is the Islamic principles upon which women can remain in a state of honour. Women are the more important part of humanity. All the great teachers of mankind were indebted to a woman. In almost all the cultures of the world, the woman has been exploited simply because she is the weaker sex in respect of her physique. Physically, she can never be as strong as the male. This extremely superficial weakness of the woman has caused different cultures and civilisations to exploit the woman which has had tragic results. We find that even a man like Aristotle, who is considered to be the father of philosophy, had nothing rational to say about the woman. He said that woman is the freak of nature, that is, when nature failed to produce the real human being, that is man, the result was woman. The same view was held by Plato, and some medieval and modern thinkers.

Among the religions of the world, as far as the records of history are concerned, we find that a woman was regarded as a chattel. The Judaeo-Christian religion, as given in the book of *Genesis* developed a theory that is an affront to the dignity of women.

In the Bible, we read that Eve came from the rib of Adam. Here, a woman is made subservient to man: an aberration from what is normal. Moreover, when the devil conspired to bring about the fall of Adam, and Paul emphasises it very strongly, it (the devil) was unable to overcome Adam, who was created in God's image. Also, Paul says:

“O, woman, the curse of God rests on you for leading Adam astray whom God created in His own image and whom the devil could not lead astray.” Apparently, when the devil failed to beguile Adam he approached Eve, who fell into his trap. Through her, he was able to bring down the fall of Adam. Adam succumbed to her womanly charms and “the original sin” was formed.

Further, we find that the English language has enshrined this evil nature of Eve in the language itself: that which belongs to Eve is evil, and devilish. Saint Gerome, Thanasius and so many more, gave the following titles to woman: “the sting of the scorpion”; “the hissing of the serpent”; “the gateway to hell”; “the daughter of iniquity and of the wild beasts” and “the most dangerous”.

Things did not improve even when the Christian fathers started learning philosophy, which was supposed to broaden one’s vision and outlook. St. Augustine, a highly cultured man advised menfolk to avoid talking to the ladies about religion. St. Augustine says: “I would not suffer a man to defile the sanctity of his personality through the filth of leading a married life. If however, there is a man who is afraid to sleep alone at night, then he can be permitted to marry”. This is history! The poor woman has been exploited as a slave and a chattel. The Hindu law giver (Manu) says: “A woman should always remain in subjection to a man, as a wife to the husband, as a widow to the son, as a sister to the brother”. Consequently, the greatest form of piety prescribed for the woman, when the husband dies, is to throw herself on the funeral pyre and burn herself. It is indeed a tragic tale recorded in the “Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.”

When the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) came to the world, he came to an ignorant community that treated women with contempt. It was an act of virtue to bury their daughters alive because they thought the birth of a daughter was something sinful. A man could marry as many women as he pleased, but the Qur’ān came to restrict polygamy to four women. Stringent conditions of justice (*‘adl*) virtually made it impossible for a man to realise.

This conception that Eve was created from the rib of Adam has

absolutely no reference in the Qur'an or the *ḥadīth*. Recently, I read an Urdu booklet, printed in South Africa, written by some *Mawlana* wherein he stated terrible things about the status of a woman which are completely baseless. We have taken from the old Christian thought that Eve was created from the rib of Adam and Eve therefore is subservient to man. She cannot have any independent status, whether economically, morally or legally. My wife was very upset when she read this nonsense and I suggested that she write a letter of protest to the publisher.

What is the Islamic point of view? We find that the Bible says that the devil wanted to beguile Adam, the Qur'an says the same. The Bible says Eve was beguiled. The Qur'an says:

فَازْلَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا

Then did Satan make them slip from it (Garden).

(Q 2:36)

Both were led astray, no names are mentioned but a dual pronoun has been used. The entire guilt about Eve has been removed. The Qur'an proclaims:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا
زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً

O mankind! Be careful of your duty to Allāh in respect of your dealings with one another, who created you from a single living entity and created its mate therefrom and scattered countless men and women.

(Q 4:1)

We know in biology, this unitary cell is the basis of life and divides itself through fission. The cell then splits into two. The Qur'an says:

مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ

created you from a single living entity or organism

(Q 4:1)

the term “man” is not referred to all. It is the single cell that evolved to become Eve on the one side and Adam on the other, that was the first cell, which came into being. It is nonsensical that Eve was created from the rib of Adam. The Qur’ān emphasises that both are human beings of the same status.

The conditioned status (variability of condition), however, suggests that man stands superior at certain times and so does the woman. According to Islam, the husband and wife have equal legal obligations towards each other. The wife is not subservient to the husband. According to the Qur’ān:

وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ

To them is due what is due from them. The husband is one degree above the wife.

(Q 2:228)

It means that as human beings they are equal but as functionaries in society, one degree of superiority is given to the husband because he is capable of undergoing the hardships of life and of being a support for others. He does not suffer from the biological handicaps of which the wife suffers. At another place we are told:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ

The men (husbands) are the protectors and guardians of their wives.

(Q 4:34)

The husband should remain awake the whole night if anything goes wrong, if there is any danger, because he has been made the protector

of the wife and family. Here the crown has been placed on his head, but it is a crown of thorns. The Qur'ān states further:

بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ

Allāh has given different capabilities to different human beings.

(Q 4:34)

And the economic burden has also been placed on the shoulders of the husband alone.

وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ

And because they support them from their means.

(Q 4:34)

Here the law is: if the husband is poor and the wife is rich, (by earning more or through inheritance), the husband can only plea for help from his wife, he cannot force her. Otherwise she would have a valid reason to divorce him. The husband cannot force his working wife even to bear her own expenses because that also rests on the shoulders of the poor husband.

As the husband is the guardian, responsibility lies on his shoulders, so he has been given the right of veto. All students of sociology know that you cannot organise an institution without unity in policy. The governing policy must be in the hands of one person, whether it is the State, School, etc. This is the law and it ought to be the law because the Ruler and Creator of this universe is One. From this point of view equal powers could not be given to the husband and the wife, otherwise the family life will be destroyed, for the wife will use her veto and the husband his veto and the poor children will not know what to do. So the obligations have been placed on the husband and also the right to veto. But how is this right to be exercised?

The first principle of Islamic social life is that all human beings should base their dealings on the principle of goodwill and understanding of one another. The Qur'ān says:

وَأَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ

Do not forget magnanimity in your dealings with one another.

(Q 8:1)

Not only justice and maintenance of peace in a healthy society, but magnanimity and grace are to be exercised towards those who are weaker than us, or placed in our charge. This is the universal law. The other principle is:

وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ

Who conduct their affairs by mutual consultation.

(Q 42:38)

Muslims are those who pursue all their dealings on the basis of mutual consultation only and not in the spirit of dictators. These principles apply very much to dealings between the husband and wife. Thus the husband cannot be dictatorial and say “because I am the husband you have to do this or behave like that or else get out of here.” He cannot say it. His function is that of a guardian, a protector – and legally both stand equal in status.

Consequently, he will have to discuss a problem with his wife respectfully and decently and only when he finds that the wife’s opinion in a particular case is wrong – as it can be – then he can say that in the interest of the family and for the sake of Allāh (swt), he wishes to take a line of action which she does not approve of. When this procedure is followed then the Qur’ān says that the wife must abide by it. This is how the social relationship can be properly adjusted from the practical point of view. This is the role of the woman as wife. Beyond this, she is superior to man, three times superior to man as a mother because it is about her that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said that:

الْجَنَّةُ تَحْتَ أَقْدَامِ الْأُمَّهَاتِ

Paradise lies at the feet of the mother.

not the father! Don't take this lightly; think about this. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was extremely wise in whatever he said. Every word he said was with extreme caution and was guided by Allāh (swt) all the time as the Qur'ān says:

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ

He does not speak of his own desire.

(Q 53:3)

Every word was under the impact of Divine Wisdom. Imagine, "Paradise lies at the feet of the mother," what does it mean? Paradise has been made the goal of all endeavour in life. Consequently according to the *ḥadīth*, the mother is three times superior to the father; and the sister is twice superior to the brother. As the Qur'ān says:

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ

For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women.

(Q 33:35)

Any action of virtue or vice whether committed by a man or woman has the same status. It is not like the pre-Islamic cultures where woman was regarded as a filthy creature and she could not go to the temples to obtain the blessings from the priest. Those religions are still in existence.

While laying down a natural law, Islam also emphasises the fact that the woman is the more important part of humanity. If the woman goes astray or falls into wicked ways, humanity will suffer much more than in the case of man. The unfortunate thing is that both man and woman become partners in most evil things. But the Holy Qur'ān emphasises that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. If you wish to reform a social order, begin with the woman from whom every human being comes forth into the world. The child knows the mother first, and gets the first lessons from her. The impressionable age of childhood is spent with the mother who spends most of the time with the child until the child reaches adulthood. If the mother

is educated, cultured, pious, possessing moral integrity and wisdom, then the child will get his or her share of all these qualities. The father, in most cases, is always busy as the breadwinner. So, if we wish to reform any society we should begin with the ladies and if anyone wants to deform any society, he should also start with the ladies. Women are the starting point and the last fortress of every culture, every society and every civilisation. Once this fortress is broken down, then no culture, civilisation or society can remain. Thus, Islam has taken the greatest care to protect the woman more than the man, hence the requirements for her to dress modestly and to act gracefully at all times.

Last year, at the University of Ottawa in Canada, a lady asked me what the position of the woman in Islam is. After I answered the question she bluntly retorted: "What do you say about the purdah system?"

"Purdah is not compulsory in Islam in the manner in which it is being practised in India. However, it is preferable or better to follow than the rules of conduct you are observing in your country", I replied.

She said: "How can you defend the purdah! You are a doctor of philosophy! How can you speak like this?"

I said: "My good lady, God is the creative force in the universe, He is hidden behind the purdah (screen). The woman is the creative force in human society. Should she rather imitate God or the devil that goes about naked!" I continued, "If you have a pebble of no value, would you place it in a safe?"

She said, "No!"

I said: "If you have a diamond, would you have it lying around or will you keep it in a safe?"

She said: "Yes!"

I replied: "The Islamic culture regards the woman as diamonds and

your culture regards woman as pebbles and stones.”

Different Muslim communities have given it a different form, but I know many Muslims in Pakistan whose treatment of women is un-Islamic. They are responsible for their actions. We are talking here of what Islam stands for. The moral and spiritual health of the Muslim society rests mainly with the women – the obligation Islam placed on the woman. Islam wants the woman to be modest, to cultivate innocence and not vulgarity. Remember, one slip in the wrong direction, and it is the woman who suffers and who usually gets caught, not the man. Therefore, who should take greater care? Who should be protected from the voluptuous eyes of the wicked and the rogues that roam the street? Naturally, the woman. If the morality of womanhood is destroyed, then everything is lost.

In science we are told that every action brings about a reaction, and every reaction is equal but opposite to an action. There was a reaction to the revolutionary message of Islam on all fronts. Islam gave a healthy outlook, destroyed the wrong notions that were there among other communities, and gave the woman a dignified position. The voice of the Prophet (ﷺ) echoed and was captured in Europe at the time of the Renaissance. As we very well know, the Renaissance was brought about through the impact of Muslim scholarship and Muslim culture. In the wake of the Renaissance came the ideas of liberty, fraternity and equality. However, the doctrine of the emancipation of the woman also emerged and sounded the death knell of human civilisation.

Equality of man and woman – a very noble idea – was practised and preached by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). But, what does equality mean to western society? It means: “Lady, you are sitting comfortably at home and I have to go to work, look here, we both are equal. Come, get out of this home with me, don’t be comfortable like a queen”. This was and is their philosophy. What an equality!

Another aspect of this equality is: if a family allows the young son to remain outside the home up to midnight (men and women are equal), then the girl should also be permitted to stay out late. The parents

should not ask her where she has been – this is bad manners according to the western society! Remember, the pre-Islamic civilisation exploited women as a chattels, modern civilisation does the same, but exploits the woman in a more refined manner.

Their philosophers – may God deal with them who led humanity astray – further defined their equality and taught women to behave like men. They also taught a moral code wherein the woman can be exploited as a toy. This is a refined way of murdering the prestige and dignity of a woman – not as a chattel but as a toy.

The history of culture, the history of the sociological phenomena in western society has been a tragic story up to the middle ages when human society was under the blind grip of the Church and when this woman was considered to be the incarnation of evil. Woman suffered and when these modern emancipators came, she suffered even more. In those days the woman could receive some compassion from the man, such as certain social courtesies shown to woman, which came into existence after the Renaissance, but it was a glow that did not last long.

Read the books of culture in England and let us find out about the women of the Victorian era. All the women all over the world used to wear the full dress, high neck, full sleeves, etc. – that was the fashion. This time the devil really came to Eve. “You are in the prime of your youth, the embodiment of charm, beauty and grace, but you look like a grandma”. The poor innocent girl asked: “My good sir, what should I do?”, and he took a pair of scissors, cut the frill, remove the high neck and cut the sleeve. The poor western girl then asked: “Do I look pretty now?” and was told: “Well not like a grandma but still like a nun; you are still too conservative, be modern!, be progressive!

The poor girl took the scissors again and cut the neckline further, the length up to the knees and the entire sleeves went and a further opening appeared in front of the chest. Then the girl of the twentieth century girl asked every man she met, “Do I look pretty now? Am I modern?” They replied: “Not yet!” Exasperated and flabbergasted she went to the dressing room and applied the scissors further and the

mini-skirt was born. She asked again and was told: "You look young but not yet the flower of beauty, be more modern." The poor girl was confused that soon she would become absolutely naked and asked advice from her mother who said that she must move with the times if she wants a partner in life. And then what happened? A dress was invented consisting of a few strings of material. This is what is happening in America and England.

When I went to France, I visited the houses of fashion and found that the inventors of these fashions were all men. These inventors ended up devising the micro-mini skirt. The poor girl again asked and the boyfriend replied: "Yes, only as a toy but not as a woman." The grace has been lost.

The high rate of divorce is another problem in Western society. The U.S.A. brought the law of companionate marriage: a man and a woman may live together for a brief period of time considered within the law. They experiment by living together to see if they will be happy together before deciding to marry. The findings were that more than 60% of these marriages ended in divorce within the same year! Shopkeepers appoint sales girls behind the counter in order to boost the sales, so advertisements come in the figure of naked women. In this modern civilization methods have been refined to exploit the woman despite the fact that she is the most valuable treasure of mankind.

This modern man has only one aim and that is to exploit the woman. Methods have been refined for this job; in spite of the fact that a woman is the most valuable treasure of mankind.

My dear sisters, beware of the ghost of modernism, of vulgarity, obscenity and shameless behaviour. That destroyer of the purity and dignity of womanhood is invading the homes of your country. The bacteria of this plague is here and spreading fast. If you wish to save your dignity and preserve the values of human life, you will have to take a definite stand against all this. I know that Muslim communities are tossing and turning between the evils of modernism and conservatism. I am sure most of you are educated and possess a sense of what is good and what is bad. I therefore appeal to all mothers,

daughters and sisters to stand up and wage an all-out war against this devil of destruction which is in your midst and appears with an innocent face but with a dagger concealed. May Almighty Allāh protect you all.

Regarding the issue of a woman working, I would like to add that the Holy Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) make no distinction between man and woman with regard to the pursuit of knowledge. Similarly, there is no distinction in the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* with earning one's livelihood, if the need arises. The woman can also earn and affirm her right to economic independence. Needless to say, the universal principle of the Islamic way of life will have to be maintained and Muslim women would have to go out of their homes with decorum, grace and integrity. After that the Qur'ān says:

لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبْنَ

Men have the right of ownership on that which they earn and women have the right of ownership on that which they earn.

(Q 4:32)

There is, however, another aspect to it. Islam wants the husband to undertake these hardships. The Holy Prophet (ṣ) said:

الْمَرْأَةُ سَيِّدَةُ بَيْتِهَا

The woman is the queen of her house.

The husband should consider himself to be the guest of his wife and ask permission to enter the house. We often forget that whatever the community achieves outside the home, it achieves much more inside the home. The spiritual and moral foundations and progress of a community are laid primarily inside the home.

To make it the rule, however can be damaging should both parents be out of their home the whole day and leave their children in hostels, nurseries, or to the care of their servants. Materially there may be an increase but parental affection decreases on the emotional side. Thus,

the woman should undertake her living outside the home only if there is no way out and if the children can be cared for. Japan is a good example of an advanced country where production does not only take place in the factory but also at home, hence cottage industries. In this way the Japanese women can make a larger contribution than the men. If a system can be devised whereby women can work without disturbing the stability of the family and preserve their dignity, then society will make great progress.

A question that is often posed is: How can one find out whether one is going to marry the right woman who can bear children. There are surely scientific ways by which this can be measured.

There is therefore no need for couples to sleep together before marriage. Prostitution is not the answer. I married my wife, my father married my mother, and we did not know anything about one another because of the purdah being observed. In my family there are no cases of divorce or bad relations between husband and wife. Arranged marriages have worked well. Go to any western country and find out how their married lives compare. Their marriages, which have been based on courtships, are devoid of any stability. From the point of view of psychology, any marriage that started from courtship and romance is bound to fail. And 99% of them do fail! When they court, they actually live in a fool's paradise.

They create images that are not there in life. Life is something bitter. Married life means obligations, and not just a past time and recreation. Romance places before them the image as if all life is a garden of roses and that those roses will bloom further and further. It cannot. The moment they get married responsibility sets in. The first child is born, the wife gets sick and the husband comes home tired to find his wife sitting morose and sad. Frustration and anger come into play. The grace and false charms vanishes into thin air. Consequently, all wise men advise never to indulge in romance. Islam advises when choosing a partner in marriage that the couple should see one another and check if they like one another physically. The moral character can be found out from others. The first consideration should be his or her character, not features, wealth or position. Our Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned the physical charms last.

The Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet (s) exhort us to approach marriage with dignity and decorum and not with vulgarity and eroticism. The pleasure of Allāh is foremost and the sensuous bodily pleasures are secondary. It is natural that sensuous pleasure dies out the moment it is obtained.

A good drama will please you, but then one recoils after having seen it. One feels empty. This is the psychological experience never to feel satisfied. Listen to any type of music and one experiences emptiness after it stops. In the same manner sexual attraction between opposite sexes comes as a blind force. There is a biological urge behind it and there is a psychological imagery that is not rational. It is all a game of emotions that are blind and irrational. The Holy Qur'an makes it very clear and here lies the salvation:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ
أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا

And among the signs of God is that he made male and female from the same species of the same nature, so that when they enter into a bond of marriage – they get spiritual consolation

(Q 30:21)

The spiritual consolation that comes through companionship is the biggest force in the ordeals of life. My wife and I support each other through this force. Our companionship is primarily spiritual and consequently we never have any quarrels. Of course, in every married life all types of moments come, and people say: "What a model your marriage is". Of course, I did not marry her for her physical charms, I came to know her only after I was married to her.

The Holy Prophet (s) – in his last charter of human rights said:

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ فِي نِسَائِكُمْ فَإِنَّكُمْ أَخَذْتُمُوهُنَّ بِأَمَانَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ

Remember O husbands, your wives are a divine trust in your hands. It is sacred, take care of it.

How sacred is a trust from God? My wife and I felt for one another in this manner and therefore our life has been extremely happy. The husband and wife grow old together and the beauty of such a life is that they love one another more and more. This is possible only in the Islamic attitude towards marriage. Allow me to give you another example, particularly for the youth to note:

My mother's uncle was a landlord with estates and a farm. He had a palatial house: one section for the ladies and one section for the men. We used to go there every year for a holiday. He became very fond of me as he had no children. He was in his early thirties and a very handsome man. As a young boy I was shocked when I saw his wife for the first time. She was blind, deaf, dumb, and a part of her face as well as her body was paralysed. But her husband served her like a humble servant. After coming from *Fajr* prayers, I saw the first thing he would do is to go to her room and wash her face, hands and feet himself in spite of there being twelve servants in the house. He would put oil on her hair and comb it. After that he would bring her breakfast and feed her with his hands. I could not understand what was happening and thought something was wrong with my mother's uncle. This thought lingered in my mind for a long time until curiosity compelled me to ask my grandfather why my grandmother was so ugly and he so beautiful. He answered, "When I married your grandma, she was very beautiful and we loved one another very dearly. This village is very far from the city and her first child was still born. There was no nurse and no doctor and only her life could be saved, not her health. Son, when I married her, I used to express my love to her, now that she is in this state, should I abandon her? As a Muslim, I should bestow more love on her so that her feelings may not be hurt. Therefore, I cannot marry another woman nor entrust a maid to care for her."

Now, there are attitudes in life to be observed. If we become believers in Allāh (swt) for all practical purposes and if we make hedonism (the pursuit of sensual pleasure) as the real aim in life, then couples living together without marriage and in prostitution will become the order of the day. Read the health report of the U.S.A. – the blood of 80% of all Americans contains the *syphilis* virus. This virus saps the energy of the body. They have to take antibiotics to keep this virus under control all the time. Examine people from Norway to Sweden and Denmark you'll

find thousands of naked prostitutes on the roadside. In terms of psychological health, the suicide rate in these countries is the highest. Unbridled freedom ends up in no marriage, no health and no romance. It is just a bubbling lava of evil that eats into the being of these communities. Do you want to repeat it in your community, my dear friends!

Finally, another contentious point that is often raised is the condition at the work place where there is inter-mingling of the sexes. Islam does not encourage the promiscuous intermingling of sexes whether in hospitals, colleges, schools, etc. It does allow healthy growth of these sexes within their own freedom. We cannot take for granted that if all men and women are well guarded they cannot fall into any kind of evil. Evil can even be of a very innocent type. Islam wants to safeguard chastity and condemns whatever violates this principle. If this can be safe-guarded by the Muslim woman and she goes to work, then it may be allowed. Of course, in a Muslim country there would be separate facilities for the ladies and men.

My personal point of view is that a healthy society can grow only when the men and women make a contribution in co-operation with one another, but avoiding all those situations where there may be the possibility of deviation from the divine law. I know of Muslim and non-Muslim men and women who are the embodiment of purity and they work with one another. But unfortunately, the percentage of such people is very low and we cannot consider this as an argument for free intermingling.

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 18

Response to Questions on Darwinism, Birth Control and *Taqdir* (Predestination)

Darwinism

With regard to the concept of evolution, the Holy Qur'ān is the first book in known history that has brought out the concept of evolution and affirmed it in the different dimensions of existence. According to the Qur'ān, the human being is evolutionary; life on earth – whether plant or animal – is evolutionary, and the entire universe itself is evolutionary. One of the excellent names of Allāh (swt) is *Rabb*. According to the commentators of the Holy Qur'ān, for example Imām Rāghib al-Isfahānī, it is defined as: “One who leads a thing by maintaining and nourishing it from one stage of growth to another and leads it to its goal.”.

The theory of evolution was worked out long before Darwin. Ibn Miskawayh, for example, wrote the book called *Kitāb al-ḥayawān* (The Book on Animal life), wherein he developed the theory of evolution scientifically. He was inspired by the Qur'ān and collected all the data and formulated the scientific theory. This book was translated into Latin and was taught in Latin for centuries. If one compares Ibn Miskawayh's book with that of Darwin's 'Origin of Species', there are numerous passages which are literal translations of the book of Ibn Miskawayh. Darwin, like many other Western scholars, does not

acknowledge this indebtedness to the Muslim scholars.

Darwin's theory, the basis of which is the principle of the natural selection, transmutation of species, and the survival of the fittest, however, contains elements of subjective bias in it. At the time when Darwin appeared, great conflict arose between the leaders of the Church and the leaders of Enlightenment. The leaders of Enlightenment who acquired Muslim education in science, mathematics, etc. were burnt at the stake or cast into prisons and killed.

Consequently, antagonism developed between the Church and the leaders of the Enlightenment. Finally, the Church could not suppress them, and their cause was taken up by Darwin whose mission was to crush the Church and all that it stood for. Thus he devised a theory where the principle of divine intervention could be refuted, and so that the entire structure of religion would fall to the ground. If God could be considered as unnecessary for the existence of nature, then belief in God becomes redundant. Darwin worked on this theory beautifully and gave us the theory of mechanical causation in biology to explain the origin of all existing things. This contradicted the Christian view of creation being a product of God's Will.

He started with the theory of the amoeba, the unitary cell, and said that through fission, the cell multiplies, (this is a fact in biology) and turns itself into more complex organisms. Then he formulated the principles of mutation, and said that life on earth has emerged from simpler forms, starting from the amoeba with man at the apex, the mutation of the ape. It is here where people feel insulted.

Akbar Ilāhabādhi reported: "Mansur said, 'I am god' and Darwin replied, 'I am an ape'," and my friend said that everybody thinks according to his calibre or level of comprehension. Let me speak on the basis of scientific knowledge itself.

If Allāh (swt) planned it in the manner that different species on this earth should come into existence in the way Darwin said, there is no harm. After all, the human body before it comes into this world is an embryo that takes on different forms. It is ugly, like a lizard, and it

continues to transform form until it becomes a normal human baby. Every human being changes form in the mother's womb, and if the species changed their forms like that, then there is no insult here. Therefore, we should not take it from that point of view.

From the scientific point of view, the Darwinian theory of evolution is not the only theory. There are the vitalists, the fundamentalists, the creative evolutionists and the telefinalists. So, Darwin's school of thought is not the only one. The people of the west tried to cling to it because of the atheistic content . Another reason to cling to the theory is that the main trend of the West has been to develop the materialistic outlook. There has been a tendency to support atheism emotionally because of Western antagonism against the Church.

In the West, other theories have emerged. The great biologist, Gabius Haldane and others who are alive, challenged Darwin's theory outright. The modern scientists say: "If we establish mutations in our experiments, we always find that mutations are harmful to the organisms (i.e. for it to develop through mutations.)" On this basis that mutations are harmful to organisms, biologists like Haldane question how healthy organisms could have evolved in nature? So, to them this principle is inconceivable and consequently, the theory of Darwin falls to the ground.

For a theory to be scientific, it must have all its links traceable, verifiable and established. In the case of the Darwinian theory, the missing link has not yet been found. Therefore, it is mere fiction, baseless and unscientific. If we view the evolution of species from the point of unity (*tawḥīd*), we'll see that this principle permeates everything in this universe. Then we'll accept the telefinalist theory. It is as follows:

There is a unitary tree of life, and as conditions evolved for the emergence of certain species, that species evolved as branches on the stem of that tree. There is no mutation. It is not that one branch changes into another – each is an independent branch. Human beings came into existence as conditions on the earth evolved and matured, to an extent that the highest being, man, could emerge and come

into existence and stay here.

According to the Holy Qur'an, the basis of existence of all animal life is one – whether that animal is an amoeba, ape, cat or human being. The Holy Qur'an says:

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ

I have created every animate thing from water.

(Q 21:30)

About the human species, the Qur'an says:

وَاللَّهُ أَنْبَتَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ نَبَاتًا

Allāh has caused you to grow out of the earth as plants grow.

(Q 71:17)

Nabāta, this spacio human personality has emerged from the earth, and this is also what Darwin and all other evolutionists say. The Qur'an says that the first man appeared from black stinking mud:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَلٍ مِنْ حَمَإٍ مَسْنُونٍ

Verily, I have created man from black (stinking) mud.

(Q 15:26)

This is exactly what modern scientists say. Black mud is to be found on the shores of the sea, and the shore of that sea is probably that shore where – figuratively or literally – is the grave of our grandmother Eve in Jeddah.

Regarding the human personality, here Islam differs with Darwinists and other evolutionists. According to modern scientists, they proclaim that they do not know what “soul” is, and talk only in terms of the body. According to Islam, all human beings were created at the “dawn of creation”. Created in what form? He, Allāh, created them in the

form of *al-rūḥ* – the essential personality or the essential being. The Holy Qur’ān tells us:

Almighty Allāh gathered the entire progeny of Adam and asked:

أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ

Am I not your Lord?

(Q 7:172)

and all answered:

قَالُوا بَلَىٰ

Yes, Thou art our Lord.

(Q 7:172)

Where was the entire humanity then? It means that it was the *al-rūḥ* (essential personality), and the dialogue was between Allāh (swt) and *al-rūḥ* at that stage. As *Mawlana* Jalāluddīn Rūmī (ra), the great philosopher and *ṣūfī* of Islam said:

This essential being (personality) has been alive for billions of years and has passed through different stages of existence in its unfolding.

It comes into this world – penetrates the soil, gathers around it a nucleus of all those earthly materials in the form of fundamental particles wherewith its body is to be built up. Then it starts manifesting itself.

Thus, it grows out of the earth, although it was created in *Jannah*. Here the problem is resolved in this manner. Therefore, it can be clearly conceived that Adam (as) and Hawa (as) were created in *Jannah*, but were born on the earth. Recall the verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ

O mankind! Be careful of your duty to Allāh in respect of your dealings with one another, who created you from a single living entity.
(Q 4:11)

This *nafs-wāḥidah* (one soul), is a conscious integrated entity which is the first unitary cell which came into being – unitary cell of the human constitution. This unitary cell multiplied through fission, and when it divided, it became two cells. The one cell is always larger than the other – as biologists know. The larger cell became Adam and the smaller cell became Eve.

وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا

And created out of itself, its pair.

(Q 4:1)

This is possible if we consider the fission of cells. And then the male cell became a male baby and the female cell a female baby under the care of the angels of Allāh (swt), in a grove which was like the womb of the mother.

In this manner, the concept of evolution is an established fact in the light of the Qur’ān. Darwin’s theory is unacceptable both on scientific and Islamic grounds. The only theory in modern science which can be acceptable in the light of the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth* is the telefinalist theory, which is now gaining ground and Darwinism is receding into the background.

Birth Control in Islam

The Holy Prophet (ṣ) said that whether you practice it or not, the souls that are to come to this world, will come. But if there is a need to practice birth control, then the man must make the effort only, and the rest is in the “Hands” of God. Mind you, birth control is not a virtue, for the principle of marriage in Islam is procreation and not lust. If birth control is necessary, then the man has to do his job, and God does His. Man works according to the Law. Whether he fails or

succeeds, God Almighty will judge him in accordance with his motive: And God Almighty will judge his actions in accordance with his motive.

Taqdīr (Pre-Destination)

This question has been the headache of all thinkers of the world, in Christianity, Islam, and so on. Of course, there are religions that preach absolute *taqdīr*, like Buddhism and Hinduism. They preach the law or the immutable *karma* – where everything is absolutely predetermined.

In the history of Islam, there are different schools of thought. There are the *Qadariyyah* (not to be confused with the *Ṣūfī* order) and the *Jabriyyah*. The *Qadariyyah* says that man is absolutely free. The *Jabriyyah* says that man is absolutely under compulsion – he is not free in any way whatsoever. The *Ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamā‘ah* says that the position of man is between compulsion and freedom.

When you read the Qur’ān, you’ll find that both these conditions have been mentioned, i.e. freedom and compulsion. Regarding freedom:

فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ

Whoever wishes to be a mu’min, he is free. Whoever wishes to be a kāfir, let him be one, he is free.

(Q 18:29)

Concerning compulsion, we are told:

قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا

Proclaim to them that whatever befalls us in this world has already been ordained by Allāh.

(Q 9:51)

It is pre-ordained. This is a problem on which great thinkers have stumbled.

Man is morally free but physically determined. The physical world is a world of determination. It is a world of causal chain (causal nexus), that is, one event giving rise to the other. The entire physical world is a series of causes and effects and once the cause has taken place, the effect is bound to happen. So it is a world of compulsion. All physical actions take place in this fashion, and no human being has any control over them. What is freedom then?

Freedom is the freedom of the will, not freedom of action. It is the freedom of the will which Allāh Almighty, through the decree of His own Will, has conferred on human beings. This is restricted to the domain of will alone, and that is why the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has clarified the issue when he said that.

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَىٰ

The value of the action lies in the motive. And every person is judged according to his intention.

When you analyse any action psychologically into its component factors, then there are three factors in every action: the motive, the form and the consequence of the action. The motive can easily differ. For example, a person “A” is driving a car, knocks down a passer-by and that person is killed. Another person, “B” is driving a car, knocks down a person, and this person is also killed. The form of the actions and the consequences of both actions are the same, but what about the motive? The motive of “A” might not have been to kill the person, and it was just an accident. The motive of “B” might have been to purposefully kill that person in such a manner that he can get the benefit of the doubt and escape the gallows.

The motives (*niyyahs*) are different, therefore, the value of the action lies in the motive and not in the consequence. Thus, what the human being is accountable for is his motive or his intention. It is the motive that will be weighed in the Balance, not the action. In this motivation, somehow, Allāh knows best how that mechanism is contained but the human being has clearly been endowed with freedom.

If we do not accept this point of view, then Allāh (swt) emerges as the most unjust and arbitrary being in which we might believe. If He has given me no freedom, then what right has He to take account from me? If everything is being done by Him and the motive also belongs to Him then I am just a tool. How can the tool be questioned about its actions? Therefore we believe in this freedom which is limited to the will.

Let us look at the other aspect – which is the beauty of Islam. If everything to happen in my life is pre-ordained, then an effort on my part to lead a righteous life is not going to change my destiny here on earth. Here the human being gets frustrated. He wants the good in this life first, and that is what the Holy Qur’ān teaches. We have been taught to pray:

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً

O Lord, give us the good of this life and the next life.

(Q 2:201)

How do we achieve this? Also, there is an intense desire in man to avoid failure and achieve success, to avoid pain and to achieve pleasure. That is in human nature. How does Islam fulfil this condition in human nature? The great Muslim philosopher, *Imām al-Ghazzali* (ra) and the contemporary scholar *Shah Waliyullah* (ra) have mentioned a theory of the functioning of the world which is called repetition of forms.

For instance, take an event that has already occurred in the history of this universe, numberless times and at numberless levels. It is not happening here for the first time. Let me explain this further. When a person dreams of an event, and that event only takes place in actual life, five years later – what has that person seen? Imagine it – an event that has not taken place yet is a non-existent thing. Remember, true dreams are a fact of life. Numerous people have experienced it. What is it that a person sees in a true dream? He observes it at a “distance” of five years from the time of its occurrence in the spatio-temporal experienceable dimension. This is what is called, *tajaddud al-amthāl*.

Try to conceive it in this way. All events that are to take place are pre-ordained and they are taking place at different levels of existence. When those events arrive at this level of the spatio-temporal dimension, then we experience them happening on a concrete or physical level. The main thing is that it is not the event, but the experience one gets from that event that counts. He is not interested in the form of the event, but in the experience, for man is a creature of experience and he lives in the world of experience. Experience makes him sad or happy, pleased or angry. Of course, there may be stimuli of different types – physical or psychic.

Those events which are to take place in human experience take place when we are awake and also take place when we are asleep, i.e. in a dream. When one sees an event in a dream – something good or a nightmare – emotionally, it makes an impact. So the impact of the experience is there; what is not there is the material consequence.

Now, Islam says that you can change your destiny and Allāh (swt) is not a slave to what He has ordained. Islam does not believe in what Hinduism and Buddhism believe in. Hinduism says that Brahma or Vishnu is the slave of *karma*. A person cannot change it.

The Qur'ān says:

يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ

Allāh can efface anything that has emerged at the tablet for he is the master of the umm al-kitāb.

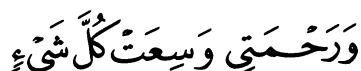
(Q 13:39)

He can affirm or erase anything. He is not the slave of Law, He is the Creator of Law and with infinite power and wisdom. What we have been asked to do is to purify our motives. *Tazkiyah*, the goal of Islam, i.e. purification of the motive. If the *niyyah* (motive) is pure, then your actions, thoughts and works will be pure. Islam demands purification in the motive which relates to the will, and in the will we have been given freedom. Therefore, perform the *tazkiyah* in your motive and then the bad things that should happen to you will be

transformed into dreams. Although they have been ordained, they will emerge as mental states, rather than physical realities.

Allāh (swt) is, *dhul-faḍḥil* ‘*aẓīm* (Q 57:21) He gives more than what we deserve, so the effort we do for our purification in becoming godly will bear fruit on the positive side.

Whatever good is to come to us in the universal scheme of things, Almighty Allāh can add anything to it, for He is the Creator and Originator of everything. His real attribute is *Rabb*. In *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, He is five times the bestower of mercy and grace, and then only is He going to take account. And in taking account, he says:



My Mercy pervades everything – (here in this world and on the day of judgement.)

(Q 7:156)

So, this Loving, Merciful Allāh, what He does is, as the *ḥadīth* says: If you walk one step towards Allāh, He takes ten steps towards you.

It is this attribute of Allāh (swt) – of Mercy and *faḍl* – which transforms even the ugliest things into good things in one’s life and gives human life success. The human being can be the master of his own destiny – in spite of the fact that this world is a world of compulsion. By exercising the prerogative of freedom of his will he can purify his motive (this is what we have to do) and the rest is taken care of by Allāh, the Almighty.

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 19

Taşawwuf Spiritual Pursuit in Islam

Taşawwuf is a very important topic because it deals first of all with the very essence of Islam and secondly there is gross misunderstanding about it.

There are Muslims who give due importance to *taşawwuf* and there are others who condemn it as something foreign to Islam. In this connection, there have been two contributory causes:

- The orientalists have tried to damage our loyalty to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) so that the enthusiasm of Muslims will vanish. Therefore, these orientalists, always tried to pick up arguments against the greatness of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).
- The next target is *taşawwuf*. We are made to believe that Islam is only a ritualistic code of life. Unless we have that inner experience, something that touches the inner self – we will be misled and only become nominal Muslims.

The practice of *taşawwuf* in the Muslim world has degenerated and it is very difficult to find it in its original form as it was given. I know how this noblest of pursuit has been commercialised, ritualised and degraded by many a person who claims to be the *murshid* of a certain order. All this is due to ignorance on the part of general Muslims and those who misrepresent this lordly pursuit.

The verse from the Holy Qur’ān:

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو
عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ

It is he who has sent amongst the unlettered a Prophet from among themselves, who communicates the message as it comes to him from Almighty Allāh. He purifies them and he expounds the Qur’ān and he teaches wisdom.

(Q 62:2)

Here Almighty Allāh defines the functions for which the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was sent:

- He gives to the people the Law or the divine code of life
- He purifies those that accept the message. Therefore the process of purification is different from learning the *sharī’ah*.
- “He teaches the Qur’ān (*Kitāb*)” and
- “He teaches the wisdom”.

Anybody who is serious about his life and its problems, would first question: “Why Religion?”. If this question is answered to his or her satisfaction that one should have a religion then the next question arises: “Which Religion?”. There are so many and each one claims to be true. When the answer comes that the religion to adopt which is considered to be true is *Islām*, then arises the third question: “What is Islam?” Here one is faced with *Al-sharī’ah* – the Divine Law.

The first two questions “Why Religion?” and “Which Religion?”, are covered by *al-hikmah*, the wisdom. Unless one knows why he is a Muslim, it will not lead him to the goal for which Islam came. Another question that follows is “How to be a Muslim?”

For just to know the teachings of Islam does not help, but how to behave as a Muslim, and how to proceed on the Path is vital. In the same *sūrah* we have been told about the ‘*ulamā*’ of the Jews:

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا

The example of those who learn the “Torah”, who learn the *sharī‘ah*, but could not assimilate it in their personalities for the transformation of their personalities, is like a donkey carrying a load of books.

(Q 62:5)

Every human being is confronted by obstacles that arise from within the human self, the baser or lower self of man (*nafs al-ammārah*) all the time. The *nafs al-ammārah* obstruct the path of the human being in his pursuit to follow his higher nature.

There are also obstacles in the environment and within the community where one has to live and interact. One has to fight against all these obstacles and unless one fights successfully, one will not be a Muslim in the real sense of the word.

Consequently, there should be a methodology (through the vehicles of the *Sharī‘ah*) to answer the question of ‘How to be a Muslim?’ which can be employed in transforming the human personality in accordance with Islam. Therefore, the word ‘*Al-tarīqah*’ actually means methodology. We have various methodologies such as *Al-tarīqah al-qādiriyyah*; *Al-tarīqah al-chistiyyah*, *Al-tarīqah al-suhrawardiyyah*, *Al-tarīqah al-naqshbandiyyah*.

Al-tarīqah answers the question of “How to be a Muslim?”.

Another question asked by a person who is serious about his life and future is, “If I succeed in becoming a Muslim in the real sense of the word, adopts the *sharī‘ah* and follows a methodology, what will be the reward or consequence? It is human nature to ask about the reward for according to Islam it is to develop the human personality from a lower to a higher level.

Therefore, if you adopt *tarīqah* the reward will be *ma‘rifah* – Godly

knowledge in depth. We have what is called ‘*Ilm* – knowledge and ‘*Irfān*, which is the superior degree of “knowing” and is higher than the concept of knowledge. The reward is to gain the knowledge of things as they really are and not how they appear to be.

‘*Irfān* has three levels:

- Man should know his “self”. Knowledge begins from the self; charity begins at home. When a Muslim cultivates his personality as a Muslim and, adopts the methodology, he gets the knowledge about himself – called ‘*Ilm al-nafs*
- ‘*Ilm al-Āfāq* – knowledge of the environment and knowledge of the cosmos.
- Knowledge of Almighty Allāh, to know Allāh and experience Him, which brings a conviction that cannot be shaken. This is a conviction that transcends the argumentation of logic. About direct experience our Holy Prophet (s) said:

لَيْسَ الْخَيْرُ كَالْمَعَانِيَةِ

Nothing can bring conviction as direct experience can.

When this experience of Allāh (swt) comes as the final fruit or reward of being a Muslim, then arrives the fifth stage *Al-ḥaqīqah*. The pilgrim of eternity arrives at his goal, as the Holy Qur’ān says:

وَأَنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ

Unto your Lord is your goal.

(Q 53:42)

Now, Allāh (swt) is Infinite, therefore the experience of Him has infinite possibilities and this journey is a journey in experience of Allāh (swt) and to discover what connection ‘I’ have with Him.

So the foundations of Islam are five and the stages through which a Muslim has to pass are also five, namely,

- *Al-ḥikmah*
- *Al-sharī‘ah*

- *Al-tarīqah*
- *Al-ma‘rifah*
- *Al-ḥaqīqah*

Furthermore, about *Al-tarīqah*, we find the authority of the Holy Qur’ān:

لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شَرْعَةً وَمِنْهَا جَا

To every community Allāh has prescribed a divine code of life or a methodology.

(Q 5:48)

And the function of this methodology is what has been said about the function of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), that is, *tazkiyah* – purification of the human personality.

In the Holy Qur’ān we are told that every human being was created in *Jannah* – the world of purity and bliss – which is very different from our world for it is a spaceless and timeless world. After the transgression of Adam and Eve (ra), Almighty Allāh commanded:

قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا

Go from here, all of you.

(Q 2:38)

The command was given in *plural* and not in *dual*.

The fact is that every human is a being of the transcendental world and was created at the dawn of creation in *Jannah*. In another verse we are told:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ
عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ

Almighty Allāh assembled the entire progeny of Adam at the dawn of creation and said: “Am I not you Lord?” They said, “Yes, You are our Lord.”

(Q 7:172)

Thus we were all existent there and possessed consciousness otherwise we would not have been able to answer. This further means that the real human being, *al-rūḥ* – the essential being – in its consciousness is a spaceless and timeless being. Then the command was given: *Go from here, all of you* (Q2:38).

Consequently, all human beings have been travelling through infinite space and time to emerge here on this earth at the appointed hour as a spatial temporal being. *Mawlānā Jalāluddīn Rūmī (ra)* (605–672/1207–1273) has said, *“This body is the projection of the essential being”* but not dependent upon this body.

When this essential being projects itself in terms of space and time, its first projection is in terms of its mind. The mind exists only in time, not in space, and consequently, its final projection is as a spatio-temporal being in the body.

Think of anything that exists in this world, for example, a flower. At first, a very small microscopic point comes into existence on the twig of the plant and it develops into a small bud and finally into a beautiful flower. Therefore, before its emergence as a point on the twig of the plant, it must have been something finer, for its development has been towards coarser stages of existence. This body of ours, before it assumes the life form – the microscopic sperm is still physical – it must have been “mental” – that is, its first projection in this spatio-temporal world.

The essential being travelled through countless periods of time under the divine command, *“Go from here, all of you”*. When death comes – death does not mean termination of existence – it only means, transfer from one level of existence to another. Before coming here into this world, this human being undergoes numerous changes or numberless births and numberless deaths. And every death is a stage for further

evolution. Before every new emergence on a higher plane, this “essential being” has to be incubated. The first grave is in the mother’s body, where it incubates and undergoes numerous changes. The word “*qabr*,” used in Islamic terminology, actually means a type of shell in which the essential being exists and undergoes changes. When the period of incubation (*‘ālam al-barzakh*) in the mother’s body ends, it is ushered into this world and participates in human civilisation as a moral being. After this term, it is again sent to the grave where it will stay till the Day of *Qiyāmah*.

The word “*qabr*” stands for the physical grave only secondarily. This is also called “*Ḥayāt al-barzakhīyyah*.” It remains alive in a process of experience in accordance with what it has done in this world. Then on the Day of *Qiyāmah*, the next stage will come as we are told in the Holy Qur’ān “*the constitution of everything will be changed*”. Let us come back to the actual topic.

The Holy Prophet (s) said:

خَلَقَ اللَّهُ آدَمَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ

Allāh created man (Adam) in His image.

It means that Allāh (swt) placed of those qualities, which He possesses infinitely, in the human who is finite. When this essential being arrives here, it is a created being and has a shadow or it is composed of light and darkness. According to the Holy Qur’ān:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا

Man can pursue the path of good or the path of evil.

(Q 91:7–8)

He is between the angels and Iblis. The purpose for which he has been sent here is to participate in the struggle here on this earth – as a servant of Allāh. Allāh (swt) is Absolute Good, so when He created the human being, the human being, originally, is also good. The evil

comes as a shadow and is the negative aspect of the human faculty. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said:

تَخَلَّقُوا بِأَخْلَاقِ اللَّهِ

Imbue yourselves with divine attributes.

and in the Holy Qur’ān we are told:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ

Verily, I have created man in the best form.

(Q 95:4)

Therefore it is for us to have and develop that *‘amal al-ṣāliḥ* which was demonstrated by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). It is at that level that the human being regains his original purity – for he is born a pure being. According to another *ḥadīth*:

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرِ أَوْ عَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ

Every human being is born pure and holy.

He does not belong to this world but belongs to the world that is pure and holy.

The journey of the essential being can be conceived as in the form of a circle. When we arrive here, we have traversed half of the circle – *descend!* Then there is the ascent. It has to go back where it came from, as we are reminded in the Holy Qur’ān:

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Our existence is only for Allāh and our return is to Him.

(Q 2:156)

for He created us in His “Image”. Thus, that part of the journey, which remains, is the journey of “*return*” at the other arm of that

circle. What the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) meant is that we should try to regain and maintain our original purity and holiness. When we arrived here, naturally we were enticed and fascinated by things of this world which take away from us our innocence and beauty of the inner-self, our moral and spiritual purity in terms of being a slave of Allāh (swt). Unfortunately, the human becomes a slave of other things and when this happens, he is unloyal to his pledge that was given at the dawn of creation when he said:

Consequently, man is bound by his pledge and in order to remain loyal to his pledge he has to strive all the time in order to acquire *nafs al-muṭma'innah*. A Ṣūfī has said, “His outer senses are engaged with things of this world but his heart remains engaged with God.” Now the problem arises: “How can this *tazkiyah* be performed? Remember the verse, “He purifies those who accept the message.” Unless it is performed, unless we are “*muzakkah*”, we will be in trouble.

In the early history of Islam, Muslims acquired enormous wealth and power and subsequently became corrupt. When the seat of the empire was transferred from Madīnah to Syria and then to Baghdad, the original purity of the Islamic way of life was progressively damaged. Muslims started practising Islam ritualistically. The meaning of prayer was not important anymore and ritualism permeated all actions. Even, the ‘*ulamā*’ became materialistically minded and conditions deteriorated badly. A group from amongst the ‘*ulamā*’ emerged and started the movement of *taṣawwuf*, from the word “*ṣaffā*”, and their objectives were clearly laid down.

Sayyidinā Ḥasan al-Baṣri (21–110/642–728) is considered to be the founder of this movement, of which – unfortunately – no writing of his is available. But, *Qūt al-Qulāb* and *Al-Risālah al-Sharī'ah* by Abū Ṭālib Makkī are available. Read *Futūḥ al-Ghayb* and *Al-Faṭḥ al-Rabbānī* by Sayyid ‘Abdul Qādir Jilānī; or *Al-Ta'arruf* by Abū Bakr Al-Kalabādī (390/1000); or *Kashf al-Mahjūb* by Shaykh ‘Alī Hujwīrī (d. 469/1077). Other reading matter is ‘*Awārif al-Mā'arif*’ by Shaykh Shaḥābuddin Suhrawardī (549–587/1154–1191). These are the works of classical masters and they based their entire doctrine on the *Sharī'ah*. Sayyid ‘Abdul Qādir Jilānī (ra) said: “The spiritual pilgrim cannot go one

hair's breadth out of the *Sharī'ah*". This is *taşawwuf*.

There have been mystics amongst the Hindus, Jews, Christians and many of them embraced Islam. Unfortunately, some of them retained some of their former practices and customs. For example, the movements of *Ikhwān al-Şaffā* or *Bāṭiniyyah* or *Karamitah* carried Muslim names only. But Islamic scholars and *şūfis* fought tooth and nail against them! Read "*Al-munqidh min al-dalāl*" or the "*Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*" of *Imām* Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazzālī (ra) and you will find the full refutation of these foreign doctrines in these works. Read the works of the ancient masters and you will find them talking about "*Suluk al-şalāh*" or "*Suluk al-şawm*" – how to develop a methodology on the basis of the *şalāh* and *şawm* which have been prescribed in the *Sharī'ah*.

The misunderstanding of *taşawwuf* is highlighted in the following happening. 'Allāmah Ibn Taymiyah (661–728/1263–1328), opposed *şūfism* and his student Ibn Qayyum, also challenged the world of Islam to prove that *şūfism* had anything to do with it. His contention was that it was un-Islamic. Ibn Qayyum raised his challenge in Egypt. This intellectual giant was advised to go to *Shaykh al-Islām* 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī (396–481/1006–1089) of Herat in Afghanistan. The *shaykh* replied that *şūfism* was the very essence of Islam. Ibn Qayyum asked the *Shaykh* how he was going to prove it as the Qur'ān and *sunnah* did not contain anything that the *şūfis* claimed. *Shaykh al-Islām* asked Ibn Qayyum to come back the following morning, and during the night he wrote a booklet called "*Manāzil al-Sā'irīn* – The stations of the spiritual traveller". He wrote this book based purely on the Qur'ān and gave it to Ibn Qayyum the next morning and asked the latter to study it.

After about a month Ibn Qayyum returned, made *tawbah* and accepted *Shaykh al-Islām* 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī (ra) as his spiritual teacher or *murshid*. Ibn Qayyum wrote a commentary on this booklet of about one thousand pages and called it "*Madārin al-Sālikīn*." Thus, if we study Islam deeply and understand how and why this movement arose, all our doubts should vanish.

Taṣawwuf is nothing else but the effort to fulfill that mission of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) as mentioned in the Holy Qur’ān – “*al-tazkiyah*”, or as mentioned in the *ḥadīth* as “*al-iḥsān*” – the beautification of Islam. “*Al-iḥsān*” means to rise and to cultivate one’s consciousness in terms of slavery to Allāh (swt) to a level where the Holy Prophet (ṣ) said:

أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ

Serve your Lord as if you are seeing Him and if that is not possible then serve your Lord with the consciousness that God is seeing you and you are worshipping Him.

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 20

A Discourse on the Grades of Knowledge

(In Commemoration of a Ṣūfī Saint)

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

*Verily, they who are close to God – no fear they need to have and
neither shall they grieve.*

(Q10:62)

We are assembled here to celebrate the death anniversary of one of the greatest spiritual luminaries of Islamic history, namely Sayyid *Khawja* Mu‘inuddīn Chisti al-Ajmeri al-Shinjiri (ra) (537–633/1142–1236). This great man lived many centuries ago and he lived a life for the sake of Allāh (swt); “in God and with God.” Consequently, he lives in our hearts up to this day.

There were numerous eminent human beings after his death in the last century and even this century too, but their names have been forgotten. However, although, *Khawja* Mu‘inuddīn lived more than a thousand years ago, his name has been commemorated all the time, not only at the place where he lived, but also in other countries.

This is the proof of what a great (Persian) *sūfī* has said: “He whose heart has been endowed with the light of love for God, he never dies.”

All those who lived and died for the sake of God, their footprints are indelibly imprinted on the face of history. This remembrance, an annual function that has been held in memory of all such personalities has not been understood properly.

It is called an *urs* – implying that it is an occasion for being joyful and happy, expressing our happiness to Allāh (swt) for having bestowed upon us that great blessing in the form of that great godly person. It is actually an annual conference for those who believe in the mission and work of this man. He dedicated his entire life to the fulfilment of the Prophet’s mission, that is, the mission of bringing life and light, virtue and piety, goodness and beauty into this world.

Consequently, it has been a custom for the *murīds* to assemble annually at the place where he is buried to exchange notes and reports about the progress of that mission. This ceremony actually started in this fashion, but, as all ceremonies become rituals in the end, people forget the real mission and they remember only the outer form!

In the same manner we have forgotten the real mission, whether we live in India, Pakistan or South Africa. Of course, this demonstration of love on our behalf for him who loved Allāh and His beloved Prophet (ṣ) is itself an act of piety, because, those who cannot love those who loved Allāh cannot love Allāh Himself.

Consequently, it is a duty of every Muslim not only to entertain in his heart the love for all those who personified the love of Allāh and His Prophet (ṣ), but to demonstrate it actively in order to acquire the love for Allāh in the proper manner.

Therefore, even from this point of view, I congratulate all of you, that you are on the right path when you celebrate this *urs* – whether the *urs* is for *Khwaja Mu‘inuddīn Chisti* (ra) or *Sayyidinā Ghawth al a‘zam ‘Abdul Qādir Jilānī* (ra) (470–561/1077–1166) or any other person who rose to the station of *Wali-Allāh*, or the friend of Allāh (swt).

My dear friends, on this occasion where the previous speaker mentioned about the *Khanqah Ḥabībīyyah*, he mentioned another personality who walked on this path and attained a status and measure of success. Consequently, his name (*Mawlana ‘Abdul Latief*) has been commemorated in connection with the *Habibiyah School* (in Rylands, Cape Town).

However, the question that arises when we hear all these names is: “*What is our duty?*” Does it consist of merely loving these people, which is an act of piety and goodness, or do we have to go beyond that. Is it our duty to follow and emulate their footsteps or to just adopt a verbal appreciation of their merit and their goodness?

I believe that Islam is not the religion of mere dogmatic belief or ritualistic demonstration of piety. It is the religion which is most comprehensive as guidance for human beings in every walk of life. It is something that has to be practised. Of course, the belief must be there, because without belief, you cannot practice anything. Belief is the cornerstone and foundation. Therefore, the belief must be correct and authentic.

The belief must be that which has been given by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and that which was practised and propagated by all his true followers, among whom the greatest were those who combined the knowledge of Islam with the experience of Islam. For them, the knowledge of Islam was not merely something scholarly but could be experienced and internalised and made part and parcel of one’s personality.

We have been commanded in the Holy Qur’ān to speak to the people of those problems which are of immediate importance, so that they can benefit from the point of practical guidance.

Therefore, I would like to emphasise a very important point. Islam has conceived knowledge at three levels:

- knowledge of one’s self
- knowledge of the environment
- knowledge of the entire cosmos

The above should lead to the experience of Allāh (swt).

In the Holy Qur'ān we are told:

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِلْمُوقِنِينَ وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ

In your earthly environment there are signs of the different domains of knowledge. Within your own persons, there are signs and pointers and guidelines to the different facets and dimensions of knowledge. Would you not engage yourselves in observing those signs of Allāh and the cultivation of the knowledge that is connected therewith?

(Q 51:20–21)

In this verse we have been told about two levels of knowledge: knowledge of one's self and knowledge of the environment around us. Then we are told in the Holy Qur'ān – in numerous places – about the cosmic phenomena and we have been asked to employ our reason and powers of observation and to probe deeper into the mysteries that lie in the entire cosmos or universe. This finally leads to the experience of Allāh (swt) and a living conviction in the personality and existence of Him and the relationship which exists between us and Allāh (swt).

I'll give you only one verse from the Holy Qur'ān:

إِنِّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

Surely in the constitution of the heavenly bodies and the earth and in the alternation between night and day, are guidelines in the realm of knowledge for those who use their wisdom or those who cultivate their reason or intellect.

(Q 3:190)

And what is the method of doing it? The Qur'ān continues:

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا
 وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

those who remember Allāh standing and sitting and lying on their sides and every moment of their lives ... and they probe into the secrets of those laws which govern the heavenly bodies of the entire cosmos and of this earth.

(Q 3:191)

When they do this, then they arrive at the stage of the realisation of Allāh.

Their first realisation is that this world and everything in it is meaningful and purposeful. They realise the worth and value of whatever there is in the environment up to the farthest cosmos. Then they realise Allāh (swt), and proclaim: “Glory be to Thee!”, Glorious art Thou, Thou art above every shortcoming and every defect, Thou art the most Perfect Being, Thou possesseth perfection in every dimension of human perception and beyond that.

And then the prayer:

رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

O Lord, save us from the doom of the fire.

(Q 3:191)

This fire is again a comprehensive fire. It is the fire of ignorance; of not knowing what we are, and what this world is and not knowing who Allāh (swt) is. It is also the fire of deprivation of experience of Allāh (swt), which is the highest bliss for the human being. This fire in common terminology is the fire of Hell but nobody really knows what Hell is.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said about the *Jannah* described in the Qur’ān as only a simile or terms of metaphor, but what it really is,

الْجَنَّةُ فِيهَا مَا لَا عَيْنٌ رَأَتْ وَلَا أُذُنٌ سَمِعَتْ وَلَا حَظْرٌ عَلَى الْقَلْبِ بَشَرَتْ

No mind can conceive because it is not something of this world.

The human mind can conceive things only of this world. Similarly concerning the *Jahannam*, no mind can conceive as to what it actually is. We have been informed about it in terms of what we know, but that is only metaphorical. Therefore, these three levels of knowledge have to be pursued by a *mu'min* and here there are certain guidelines I wish to place before you.

Have you ever thought about the following. Your hand has five fingers and foot has five toes. You have five primary physical senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching and there are five foundations of Islam. These five things are the pointers that just as there are five primary senses for the observation of physical things, there are five levels of human reason. This is for the co-ordination of the knowledge one might get about this physical world or the co-ordination of the experience one might get.

One will have to distinguish between knowledge and experience. If one hears music, there's an "experience" that is not knowledge. So, there is also a level in the intellect itself which co-ordinates the experience of this world. Then there is a level in reason which co-ordinates the experiences of the transcendental world. This human reason can be divided, basically, into two: the lower reason and the higher reason. The higher reason is assisted by five inner senses and this is the teaching of all the *ṣūfīs*.

The inner senses are five and function in co-operation with the higher reason, which some people call *intuition*. These primary senses actually work in connection with knowledge of the physical sciences or social sciences. It is all on the basis of these primary senses that we have. The function of these senses is to report to the "discursive reason" which is there within our brains. These precepts are converted into

concepts which in turn are converted into principles and the principles are converted into values. Consequently, we get a value system. This is the way through these outer senses.

However, there is a way through the inner senses as well, which function on what may be called the “transcendental being of the human personality”. The human personality has a mundane being which is five dimensional and works on these five primary senses. The human personality also has a transcendental being, which works on the basis of the five inner senses. Then each of these five inner senses has five dimensions.

Unfortunately, it will take a very long time if I should speak on this. The very important point I wish to bring is that these great spiritual luminaries of Islam, like *Khwaja* Mu‘īnuddīn Chisti or Sayyid ‘Abdul Qādir Jilānī (470–561/1077–1166) or *Shaykh al-akbar* Ibn ‘Arabi (ra) (560–638/1165–1240) or any other great personality among the *Awliyā’-Allāh*, were men or women of knowledge!

They were human beings possessing a higher knowledge and Islam has demanded that every Muslim should be a possessor of knowledge. As the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has commanded:

طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ وَمُسْلِمَةٍ

Cultivation of knowledge is an obligation on every Muslim male and female.

An illiterate Muslim is a contradiction of those terms, although this contradiction is painfully present in the Muslim world today. Islam is the religion of knowledge, which combines faith with knowledge. In Islam, the entire struggle of a Muslim is in the domain of knowledge. He is born to know, and in order to know, he should know himself, as it has been said:

مَنْ عَرَفَ نَفْسَهُ عَرَفَ رَبَّهُ

He who knows his self, knows his Lord.

One can only know Allāh if one knows oneself. Similarly, a person should know himself and the environment in which he is born, lives and dies. So, the knowledge at these levels, even from a spiritual point of view, is a must in Islam.

We read in history about *Sayyidinā Khwaja Mu'īnuddīn Chisti* (ra), that when he came to Ajmer under the command of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) and he established his headquarters for propagating Islam in India, the Hindu ruler and the Hindus around that area could not meet the challenge of his dynamic personality and subsequently, searched for the greatest *yogi* who lived in the Himalayas by the name of Garam Pal. This *yogi* challenged *Khwaja Ṣāhib* to a spiritual duel and said that he could fly in space. It is said that the *yogi* flew, and *Khwaja Saheb* ordered his wooden sandal to fly after him, hit him and bring him down! How could this happen? Let me tell how it can happen, even in the case of every human being.

A piece of iron cannot fly, for it is under the influence of the force of gravity. Throw it up, and it falls down again. But if those laws are found whereby an aeroplane can be made, then not only can the piece of iron fly, but it can also enable others to fly when they sit inside it. So, for a person who is ignorant of those laws of nature it will be an impossible for metal to fly in the air. Similarly, a person who finds out those laws of higher knowledge, where this essence of the entire world is discovered, can do greater wonders.

The human being is the most comprehensive essence of the entire cosmos because the human being is the greatest in Allāh's creation. Allāh (swt) has placed numerous inherent powers and machines within the human being. The only object of the human being is to learn how to work those machines. He has the wireless and television sets and has the engine which is placed in the aeroplane or spaceship to enable it to fly. He has these wonderful things, but are all sealed. Consequently, the obligation has been placed on the human being to operate the mechanism of his personlity so that he may benefit from it.

This may sound in principle correct or it may sound as fiction, but the *karāmāt* of the *Awliyā'*-Allāh and the *mu'jizāt* (miracles) of the

Anbiyā’-Allāh were supernatural.

The *karāmāt*, are shown by Allāh Almighty through His *awliyā’*, are extraordinary happenings which an ordinary human being cannot do. Only the person who knows the higher science can do them. It is possible only to those who probe the laws of nature at the highest level of this cosmic world who can make the atom bomb or the rockets land on the moon.

Similarly, those people who are the spiritual scientists, also know the laws of the higher world. Motorcars have different gears, similarly, there are different gears in the human personality and different gears in the constitution of this world. It has been normally geared at a certain level on which we normally live and act – as we are doing now – but it will be a very big mistake to think that this is the only gear in which this human machine or order of this world can work. To me, it may work or appear like that, but to an ordinary educated person who has not learned physics (about the atom and the powers that are inherent in the atom) may not believe in the power of the atom bomb.

Also for such a person, it may be fiction that the atomic fuel that is placed in a rocket is quantitatively very small but has the power of producing energy which can carry the rocket, a very heavy object, from the earth to the moon and back. It will appear as fiction to the common man who does not know physics and the atom and the powers that are inherent in it.

Scientists are demonstrating this and in spite of being ignorant about it, people agree that it is correct. The common person is ignorant of that science for he cannot make the rocket or the atomic fuel. Therefore, those things which have happened in history and those who witness the present happenings are unable to deny them. Those who don’t see these happenings will be inclined to question them.

May I tell you of another instance of *karāmāt* that were performed by the *Awliyā’-Allāh*. They were not televised, but show us the working of this “higher reason”. Its demonstration, however, is in the books

and here I'll give you two illustrations:

One of these great *ṣūfis*, *Mawlana* Jalāluddīn Rūmī (ra) was once asked how heavenly bodies stay where they are and what holds them? Of course, the answer can be that God holds them, but that is only a fundamental answer and not a scientific answer which the inquirer wanted. Rūmī answered, that “all these planets are held by the electromagnetic field”. And this at a time when physical science was still in its infancy and astrophysics was not yet born!

He did not lead his life as a scientist. And even if he did, it took physical science centuries to come to this conclusion that the heavenly bodies are held together by an electromagnetic field! In fact, *he used exactly this term*, when electricity and magnetism were not known. How could he have discovered this except on the basis of “*transcendental reason*.”

When the higher reason works with the help of the five inner senses and projects itself on the transcendental being, it grasps all those information of knowledge which a physical scientist takes many years and even centuries to obtain.

Another great *ṣūfī*, *Shaykh al-akbar* Muḥiyuddīn Ibn ‘Arabi, centuries ago when physical science was still in its infancy and astrophysics was not yet born, wrote in one of his books “the atom as the indivisible particle”. On the basis of his higher reason and his five inner senses, he undertook a journey of knowledge and penetrated into the atom and said “... the atom has several cyclozones. This has been discovered after the discovery of the anatomy of the atom in terms of chemistry, not more than twenty years ago. It has only been found out now that the atom has several “cyclozones”.

How could he even speak in those terms? How could he speak about the facts of knowledge that were so hidden? Several hundred years ago, a *ṣūfī* in his monastery uttered these truths while the scientists of today are only saying it now from their laboratories! This is the working of the higher reason!

Finally, may I add that in Islam, the scope of knowledge and education is the highest and widest, while today's Muslims have made it the narrowest! When they think of knowledge in Islam, they think only of *fiqh*, *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr*, where it ends. Of course, you must have this knowledge, but it is only a part of knowledge.

In the Holy Qur'ān we have been commanded to pursue all knowledge – not only a particular branch of knowledge. Every single branch of knowledge is sacred in Islam and has to be pursued by a Muslim. And in this, Islam goes beyond the modern western conception of knowledge: the division of the branches of knowledge into social sciences, physical sciences, etc.

Islam stands for all these sciences and the pursuit of physical science is one of the highest forms of worship of Allāh (swt). Islam goes beyond this and takes us to the realm of higher reason and finally it takes us to where it should go: The Qur'ān says:

وَأَنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ

Unto your Lord is your goal.

(Q 53:42)

And on the Day of Judgement,

وَجُوهٌ يُّومِذْنَ نَاصِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاطِرَةٌ

Those will be awarded the Garden of Bliss, from where they will see their Lord.

(Q 75:22–23)

This is the highest state of knowledge – to know Allāh Himself, who is the Real Reality behind everything.

A Muslim has to walk this path right here and to acquire knowledge at all levels. It is the duty of every Muslim to pursue knowledge at the level of the higher reason which was pursued by great people like *Khawja Mu'inuddīn Chisti* (ra) whose *urs* we are celebrating.

If we confine ourselves only to celebrating the *urs*, we will be failing in our duty. I wish that we who love the great *Awliyā'-Allāh* should try to lift ourselves above this ordinary illiterate level of understanding and resolve that we will make this a learned community that progresses in knowledge without which even *īmān* becomes superstition.

The Holy Qur'ān tells us:

لِيَهْلِكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ وَيَحْيَىٰ مَنْ حَيَّ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ

He who is to be revived spiritually and given a new life through Islam, he should build up that life on the basis of reason (and positive rational pursuit) of the īmān.

(Q 8:42)

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 21

Discipline in *Dhikr*

Islam is the religion of discipline. It is not based on any dogmatic mysterious belief, nor on any mystifying scheme of salvation. It is based on very clear beliefs given in the *aqā'id* (belief system). All of us know what the *aqā'id* of the *Ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamā'ah* are according to Islam. In this connection, the most important point is discipline.

In the Holy Qur'ān we are told:

إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ
أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا

The function of a believer whenever he or she is invited towards what Allāh and His beloved Prophet orders, their function is only to say: 'We hear and we obey'.

(Q 24:51)

We are also told that whatever is commanded by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), there is no choice for anyone.

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ
لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ

It is not possible for the believers whether male or female, when given a command by Allāh or His Prophet, to have any choice in the matter.

(Q 33:36)

Of course, Islam has been given to us in such a rational manner, such a natural code of life, that all our hardships have been taken into consideration. For example, we have been taught that we should pray in such a manner – the *qiyām*, *rukūʿ*, *sujūd*. But if one is sick, one is allowed to sit and read the prayer. If the person is more sick, he or she may lie down, and if he or she is very sick, he may do his prayer without reading with his tongue. Thus Islam has taken into consideration all the different situations that might arise in the life of a Muslim. But the spirit that should be there in every Muslim is that of obedience.

A person who wants to be a Muslim in the genuine sense of the word, in its depth and in his inner as well as his outerself, that person is called a *ṣūfī*. A *ṣūfī* does not merely believe in only the external or formal manifestation of Islam. He also believes in combining the spirit of Islam and doing everything out of consideration for the spirit behind it and with consciousness. As we have been told in the *ḥadīth*:

إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا

... with genuine *īmān* and by constant examination of what we are doing ...

“*Ihtisāb*” (self examination) has to be there when we are praying, in the manner in which the Holy Prophet (ṣ) asked us to pray, or is it just a formality? The real purpose of prayer is to be conscious of Allāh and to examine our actions. True prayer involves a change from within, if this does not take place, we have not really prayed. The prayer should be repeated until a person acquires that change according to his capacity, for everyone’s capacity is not the same. One should practice this until one is confident that he has acquired that benefit from praying.

In the *ṣūfī* way of life, what is emphasised is that we not only have to obey at the formal or external level of obedience but in terms of real

inner obedience. It is only when this consciousness is there that we can obtain those benefits that are there in prayer or fasting or in speaking truth, etc.

A person speaking the truth, for the sake of people's praise, has lost the real value of it. If the ulterior motive is there, then he has not performed virtues – only the evil effects of speaking falsehood have been avoided. Speaking the truth must be solely with the consciousness that Allāh (swt) is seeing me and will take account of me, and to speak falsehood is something dishonourable.

The consciousness has to be built up in this manner that; "I am a human being and Allāh Almighty says that He has made me honourable as His potential *khalīfah*. Thus, I have to build up and develop all those powers which Allāh (swt) has placed in me, whether they are physical, moral, intellectual or spiritual, all these have to be cultivated by me."

The entire personality is a unit and all these faculties will have to be developed. If a person pursues spirituality and concentrates only on that and neglects the doing of good, he will not be acting as a balanced Muslim nor will he be able to develop his full personality. The straight path is the moderate path, which requires discipline, otherwise one ends up in mysticism.

Many Muslims pray, fast, and love the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and Allāh (swt), but they have forgotten that discipline is the condition which will make them good and great. Consequently, it was impossible for any of the companions of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) to disobey him even if they had to risk their lives. Whatever he commanded, was carried out without question. That obedience which the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) advised was demonstrated wholeheartedly and gladly accepted.

What is happening nowadays is that if there is an *imām* of a *maṣjid* and he tries to lead the people, they then question his integrity and accuse him of being useless but never question their own motives. Why are we worried about someone else's duty? We will be asked by Allāh (swt) about our own duty! However, these things are happening

in our communities and that is why we are not making any progress. Trying to transfer one's obligations onto the shoulders of others is the great disease.

In any group of Muslims or organisation we will hear the conditions to do good. Akbar Ilahabadi said: If some Muslims come forward to do something for their community, they discourage each other and therefore nobody moves ahead. And then the quarrels start.

All these are un-Islamic attitudes. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) advised about the *imām* of the congregation: "Pray behind any Muslim, whether he is virtuous or a sinner," it is not that you are praying to the *imām*. It is only a form of bringing the community life together. If your attitude in prayer is good, you will get the benefit of prayer even if the *imām* is a sinful person. But if the *imām* is well known for his obscenity or crime, then, of course the community should not allow such a person to be the *imām*. But we are all sinful people as Jesus said, "*Let him who is not a sinner, cast himself the first stone.*" We are all sinners and imperfect beings, so we should have humility and try to seek Allāh (swt) and not the shortcomings of fellow human beings. This is what we were taught and this is what was actually practised.

Recall the incident about Sayyidinā Khālīd ibn Wālīd, when, on the instruction of Sayyidinā 'Umar (ra), immediately handed the command of the army over to his subordinate and fought as an ordinary soldier. It is emphasised in the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* that *īmān* means that a person must fulfil his promise whatever the consequence. We have been told: "*fulfil the pledge.*"

We have become so low that we promise something and we do not carry it out and only make a lame apology. Islam regards this as the very negation of *īmān*. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) emphasised that in all our deeds of piety, the major factor is steadfastness. He said: "The best action is that in which you are constant." If you are not constant with a good action of a high degree but you are constant with a good action of a lower degree, the latter will be considered more meritorious by Allāh (swt).

So a Muslim is a person who has to be steadfast and behave in a dignified way. He is not a cheap type of person who can be swayed any time. When he understands that something is from Allāh (swt), and that he ought to do it, he will do it. Nothing will cause him to deviate, and in this lies success. A person who pursues something constantly with discipline, even if there should be obstacles, he will succeed. Constancy is the key to success. Constant activity, even a little at a time, will some day prove fruitful.

A time comes when you suddenly feel that you want to remember Allāh (swt) for eight hours during the night, but for the next week or two you are asleep, not remembering Allāh (swt) for even half an hour, that will not help you. So, always start with the minimum quantity, then gradually increase it to suit your life.

What Allāh (swt) demands from us is a healthy and sound spiritual heart. He does not want us to pile up hardships onto our lives, for He says:

وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ

I have not sent this down as a hardship.

(Q 22:78)

The points which I gave – don't think that they are few – you may find very difficult to practice, but do them with sincerity. I am sure you will feel the blessings which come through them. People have witnessed and seen that when *adhkār* is made, the saints and *malā'ikah* join them, and maybe Allāh (swt) will enable some of you also to see this, *inshā' Allāh!*

The members of the group are living in various areas and if it is too difficult to come together every week, then you may have two or three groups – each in a different area, but at least once a month, all should come together and perform the *adhkār*. You will see that the *adhkār* I gave will take you about half an hour, so please take it up and be constant with it.

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 22

Murid (Initiation)

The *bay‘ah* (pledge) is given to Allāh (swt). Every human being who is conscious of his or her shortcomings and wants to reform their spiritual life in accordance with the teachings of Islam needs a teacher to guide one onto the spiritual path. He or she needs knowledge to walk that path.

The teacher also places the pledge in the “Hands” of Almighty Allāh, because *hidāyah* is only in the “Hands” of Allāh (swt). This *hidāyah* flows, according to the *ṣūfī* way of life, from Allāh, through the Holy Prophet (ṣ) and from him, through the chain (*silsilah*) of spiritual luminaries that have been there since his time, up to the present day.

All divine blessings come to the Holy Prophet (ṣ), as the *ḥadīth* says: All blessings are bestowed by Allāh and the work of distributing them to His creation has been given to the Holy Prophet (ṣ).

Allāh (swt) has created the personality of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) as the first transformer. After the first transformer in our *silsila* then there are those who received that knowledge from him and those who built themselves up in the fashion the Holy Prophet (ṣ) advocated. They are spiritually superior and in every other way elevated and have also attained a level of perfection.

The next transformer is *Sayyidinā* Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq (ra); then *Sayyidinā* ‘Umar (ra); then *Sayyidinā* ‘Uthmān (ra) and then *Sayyidinā* ‘Alī (ra).

Here in our *shajrah* we mention the name of *Sayyidinā* ‘Ali (ra) because he was specially chosen to transmit this spiritual knowledge. We enter the Qādiriyyah Order, or any other order, for the sake of spiritual knowledge and practice to become godly. By godly, we mean acquiring as much holiness as possible: to refine our thought, body, soul, our entire being.

Consequently, we read the *shajrah* to remain in touch with this chain or channel which has been formed by Allāh (swt) for us. When we read the *shajrah* we establish our connection with the Holy Prophet (ṣ) through that chain.

The establishment of the *shajrah* is the spiritual way of connecting with Almighty Allāh. Allāh (swt) is everywhere and His mercy or His actions for His creation in general terms, are for every human being. That “channel” was established by Allāh (swt) when a human being wants to go on a special path and wants to obtain that special favour from Allāh (swt). The other channels also run through the *malā’ikah* whom He appointed as functionaries for everything.

Here, to improve ourselves spiritually, we have to maintain the contact in our consciousness all the time through this chain. Therefore we read the *shajrah*. *Shajrah* means “tree”, and it is in the sense of a chain that this *shajrah* has to be read.

Whilst most of the spiritual exercises are to be done individually, in seclusion, members of an order are expected to assemble (as a rule) at one place every week and should perform certain spiritual exercises collectively. The value and benefit of collective spiritual exercises are that the spiritual condition of some are better than others and in turn they help others to acquire that spirituality. Spiritual exercises are done once a week and in our *silsilah* this has been fixed on Thursday evenings. It may be done after *ṣalāt al-maghrib* or ‘*ishā*’ prayers depending on the convenience of all those who have to participate.

The weekly exercise that is to be done is as follows:

- Reading the *Fātiḥah* (*du‘ā’*);
- *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* is to be read by everyone 7 times;

- *Sūrah al-Inshirāḥ (alam nashrah)* to be read 79 times (jointly);
- Jointly read *durūd sharīf* 100 times;
- Jointly read *sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ* 1 000 times;
- Again *durūd sharīf* 100 times;
- Then certain names of Allāh 100 times each

This spiritual exercise is extremely important as it is a preparatory stage to the exercise of *dhikr*. The exercise of *dhikr* is the most important basis as we are told in the Holy Qur’ān:

أَلَا يَذْكُرُ اللَّهُ تَطْمِئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

With Allāh’s remembrance, the heart finds its equilibrium.

(Q 13:28)

The spiritual equilibrium of the heart comes through *dhikr-Allāh*, basically.

All should sit in the posture of *al-tahiyyāt*, and then start with *astaghfirullāha rabbī* and so on, led by the presiding person. The *dhikr lā ilāha illal-lāh*, is repeated 100 times and is done as follows:

As I explained, the human personality consists of the “lower self” and the “higher self” and the centre of the carnal or lower self is considered to be the navel. The *dhikr* is composed of two parts, namely negation and affirmation. *la-ilāha* and *illal-lāh*, and so the *dhikr* has to be read in the same manner with the fullest concentration, with the eyes closed and the hands on the knees. One should raise the *dhikr* from the navel to the right shoulder.

Imagine that there is something like a dark smoke at the navel, and as this expression of “*lā*” is raised from the navel, this dark smoke is being pulled up to the right hand shoulder. This ends the “*lā*”. Then “*ilāha*”. Turn the face from the shoulder to the front and imagine now that the dark smoky thing has now entered the head, and when you completed “*ilāha*”, that smoky thing then leaves the head and the body.

Now imagine that light is coming from above, enters the head, and

emerges from the position between the eyes above the nose and it forms a beam. Then imagine that there is a spiritual heart (where our physical heart is) which is illumined and the word “Allāh” is inscribed on it. This light that comes from above through the head strikes the heart when we say *illal-lāh*. This has to be said in three strokes, *il-lal-lāh*, and should be said with some force. Imagine that that beam is striking that illumined heart, creating a splash of light!

In this manner, with the greatest concentration and with this imagery, this *dhikr* has to be done 100 times. You will notice that when the *dhikr* is done in this manner, you will feel very tired. It is not easy. Make this *dhikr* not too loud, but neither inaudible. It should be at a medium pitch and in a clear voice and should be flowing. Don’t make haste. It should be in line with the presiding person and in tune with him.

If the presiding person feels that the voices are not harmonised then he may stop the *dhikr* and ask all to begin again. When the *dhikr* is completed the hands may be folded with ease and with the eyes still closed, one should imagine that a light is coming from above and falls on the *qabr* of the Holy Prophet (s). This light is coming via the tombs of the other *Awliyā’-Allāh* to the heart of the present-day *murshid*. From the heart of the present-day *murshid*, it is falling unto your heart. This is the imagery. The light is coming from Allāh (swt) to your heart.

This state of meditation should be maintained for twenty three minutes and the presiding person must ensure that this is maintained. After this period of meditation the presiding person lifts his head, opens his eyes and says: *ḥaqq, ḥaqq, ḥaqq, lā ilāha illal-lāh muḥammadur-rasūl-allāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*.

Then all the others open their eyes, say the same, and then all are ready for the next exercise of *dhikr*.

The presiding person says: *aḥḍalū dhikri lā ilāha illal-lāh*, but the second time he says *illal-lāh*. When this is said the same imagery must be imagined as was done in *lā ilāha illal-lāh* and the same silence at the

end is maintained as above.

Then the third *dhikr* will begin by the presiding person saying once again: *afḍalu dhikri lā ilaha illal-lāh* and then saying: *allāhū*, the emphasis being on the “al”. Imagine the light from above falling on the heart. This *dhikr* is done 100 times followed by the same meditation and ending as the other two. This completes the *dhikr*.

The *shajrah* may be read by the presiding person who will then follow with the *du‘ā* and all must say “*āmīn*.” After the *du‘a* the presiding person will recite: *innal-lāha wa malā’ikatahū yuṣallūna ‘alan-nabī*, and all will stand up, and then the *salām* is to be read. The person who can take the lead best should lead and all will join. After the *salām*, the final prayer is made and the weekly *ḥalqah* comes to an end. This weekly *ḥalqah* is combined with the daily exercise in *dhikr*.

For a person who really wants to acquire spiritual refinement it is obligatory on him in the very beginning to take care of his five daily prayers first. These should be read at the proper times with devotion and with enthusiasm, concentration and contemplation. You should not feel lazy about it, nor feel that it is a debt that has to be paid. The prayer should be said with the spirit of communion with Allāh (swt) and with a vibrant consciousness. Effort should not be for more optional prayers as certain people feel. It is the quality of the five daily prayers which is of value. If one only reads the prayers that are obligatory and tries to beautify them and reads them with the fullest of concentration, I can assure you that you will feel very tired after that. If a prayer is said without concentration and it is said merely as an exercise or as something that has to be read and certain postures that have to be made, then one may read twenty *raka‘ahs* without feeling tired. But when one reads properly, which has been commanded, that person should receive the blessings that should come through prayer. The Prophet (ﷺ) said after having observed a person offering prayer – he called that person and said that the person had to pray again. He also said:

لَا صَلَاةَ إِلَّا بِحُضُورِ الْقَلْبِ

Prayer is not prayer if it is not said with the fullest concentration of the personality.

So those blessings that should come through prayer do not come if it is not said in the proper manner.

Remember, never try to make too many prayers. Whatever has been prescribed, try to do those properly and to beautify them. Then after you have done this, add the *tabajjud* prayers. Start with four *raka'ahs* only. Then after some time, add two, and later add another two – up to the maximum of twelve. Don't try to do twelve and think of all the *thawāb* you might get. Try to get the question of *thawāb* out of your minds. You are not doing it for the sake of *thawāb*, you are doing it for the sake of benefitting yourself and for building yourself spiritually. Remember this! For that reason, start with four *raka'ahs* for one or two years. If you read these prayers properly, you'll see how tired you will feel. When you are tired, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Stop your prayer."

Prayer has to be said with the fullest spiritual fervour and in a state of mind where one does not see it as a burden. That ought not to be there because one prays out of love for Allāh (swt). In so doing you will not feel any burden or pain which is the negation of love. This is the very violation or negation of love.

Therefore, try to emphasise quality and not quantity. In addition, these *adhkār* should be read everyday after or before the *Fajr* prayers. Read them with the fullest concentration. Before you start the three *adhkār*, read *astagh-firullāh* one hundred times; in this way you are building a consciousness of *tawbah*. When you have said it in the proper manner, you will feel tired, but it will create an attitude in your mind that throughout the day, you will be conscious that "I must not do anything that may be wrong."

So: *astaghfir-allāh* – 100 times; *durūd sharīf* – 100 times; then the three *adhkār*; then again the *durūd sharīf*. This is the minimum you must do every morning. After that, make *du'ā'* for yourself.

In the field of morals, there can be no spirituality without morality. If morality is not high, it is all a fantasy; you cannot acquire spirituality. The psychic powers can be acquired – like the Hindus, for example – but that is not our goal.

Our goal is Allāh (swt) and to attain the divine pleasure. Consequently, our path runs through all these channels, but it transcends them. This path is above the psychic path. The person who is doing these spiritual exercises may acquire some of these psychic powers along the way. We are advised to keep away from them lest the attaining of some of these extraordinary powers may fascinate us and detract us from our real goal which is Allāh (swt). These things will obstruct our way, so try to shove them aside and carry on towards that goal.

We have to follow the real *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) wholeheartedly. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) stayed without food for a few days at a time. Are we not going to do this? He used to stand two to three parts of the night in prayer (and stand very still). Are we not going to do this too? He would not keep anything in his house at the time of sunset. He would give to the needy food, money or things of value. Are we not going to do this?

Hence, we have a very low value of following the *sunnah*. We only follow those things which are comfortable and suitable for us and which we think will bring us reward or *thawāb* from Allāh (swt). The real *thawāb* is to sacrifice what you love as the Qur'ān states:

لَنْ نَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ

You are not performing real virtue until and unless you sacrifice for the sake of Allāh that which you love most.

(Q 3:92)



Real virtue can only be attained if you follow the *sunnah* of sacrifice. For example, if a person abuses you, you can respond with a forgiving smile rather than become enraged through your lower self (*nafs al-ammārah*). Real virtue also includes feeding someone else while you yourself remain hungry. This is what the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) used to do.

Try to follow the real *sunnah* by imitating the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). Your *dhikr* will be useless without your sound moral character. Islam teaches that a sound mind lives in a sound body which is possible with sound morality. Thus a Muslim has to take care of everything; he has to keep his body, mind and morals sound and then go into the spiritual domain.

In Islam spirituality is not hypnotism, clairvoyance, training of the will or training of the psyche. Spirituality involves three moral virtues which must be strictly guarded and they are: *truthfulness; honesty; service to fellow beings*. The opposites are: speaking lies, dishonesty and hurting or damaging anyone's feelings or interests. To tread the *ṣūfī* way of life one has to cultivate those three moral virtues.

This is the first lesson in spirituality. Try to do it sincerely just for a period of six months and you'll see the change within yourself. *Ghawth al-A'zam*, *Shaykh* 'Abdul Qādir did not become what he was just like that!

Through practice you will notice a positive change in yourself and have dreams which have been called "*bushrā*" in the Holy Qur'an. It is practice which make man perfect, not merely wishful thinking. All ideas of magic – take it out of your minds, for the *ṣūfī* way of life is not magic. It is a natural way, just as you build up your knowledge from the lower level to the higher level. Regarding those who persevere, Allāh (swt) says time and again in the Holy Qur'an:


أَسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ


All the highest ranks come to a person who perseveres and remains steadfast.

(Q 2:153)

If there is hardship, remain steadfast. Do not worry, for you are walking the way of truth and Allāh will take care of you. As it has been said:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَمُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ
الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ
الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ

Those who proclaim that Allāh is their Lord and they remain steadfast, the angels of God come to them with the message: 'be not afraid of anything, nor grieve, for your reward will be heaven. I am your Protector and Friend in this life as well as the Hereafter'.

(Q 41:30)

If Allāh (swt) becomes anybody's friend and protector, what else does one need? But this comes through steadfastness, as exemplified by the *awliyā'* Allāh who were tested through trials and tribulations. Nobody can develop without trials, for Allāh (swt) says:

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ
وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ

I will test all such people in terms of hunger, fear of loss in business or other material losses. I will test those who say that they love Me.

(Q 2:155)

And then we are told:

وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

Glad tidings to those who persevere.

(Q 2:155)

Those to whom anything untowards happen, say:

قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Our life is only for Allāh and our journey is to Him.

(Q 2:156)

The trials are tests and a person who shows steadfastness wins the battle of merit as well as being extricated from that trial. The Holy Qur'ān tells us:

وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ

*And whoever has confidence and faith in Allāh, and trusts in Him,
Allāh is enough for him.*

(Q 65:3)

This is the way, my dear friends, and may Allāh (swt) enable us to follow this way genuinely and live the truth, *inshā' -Allāh*.

The *amīr* of the *ḥalqah* should be a person whose knowledge in Islam is the highest and whose level in general wisdom and piety is also the highest. This is the standard and in all honesty you should appoint a person as such in this connection.

Visiting the tomb of a saint and asking direct help from the saint, is it *shirk* or is it correct? In response to that question: it is wrong but it is not *shirk*. *Shirk* is only when a person considers something else as a deity. It is not the proper Islamic way. The graves of the saints are the battery charging stations, and therefore people do not go there for the purpose for which they are meant. If you need to charge your spiritual battery, they are the charging stations. You can also go there and pray to Allāh through them and ask them to pray for you, but prayer is only for Allāh (swt).

I can speak directly to my *murshid* or *Sayyidinā Ghawth al-a'zam shaykh 'Abdul Qādir* (470–561/1077–1166) regarding spiritual matters only: “I need this, or that,” but I cannot treat them in the same manner as I treat Allāh (swt). I cannot ask anything else from them, whatever else I require. I have to ask from Allāh, for the Holy Prophet (ṣ) said that even if you have to ask for the button of your shirt, ask for it from Allāh. The entire *ṣūfī* way of life is for Allāh (swt), He is the goal, so how can we confuse these issues? Therefore, if you go to the grave of a saint everyday, it will benefit you if you go for the proper purpose.

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 23

Mawlūd al-Nabi

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ

Verily, there has come to you the nūr (light) and the Book which is clear in its exposition of guidance.

(Q 5:15)

My dear brothers and sisters, time and again you have been hearing the verse:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ

Indeed Allāh and His angels send praises to the Messenger.

(Q 33:56)

But have you ever thought about the uniqueness of the action of sending *ṣalāt* and *salām* on the Holy Prophet (ṣ)? Let me draw your attention to a very important point which you may not have given a second thought. When you offer prayers, Allāh (swt) does not offer prayers with you. When you do any other act of virtue, Allāh (swt) does not participate with you, but when you send *ṣalāt* and *salām* on the Holy Prophet (ṣ), then you are a participant with Allāh (swt) and His *malā'ikah* (angels). That is the only action of virtue where there is a participation of Allāh (swt) with His servant.

Is it something meaningless? Is it something which you can just pass by like that? Why don't we Muslims give proper thought to why Allāh (swt) says in the same verse that He send praises to the Prophet (ﷺ). Remember also that this *yuṣallīna* 'alan-nabīy, this *sīghah* is *sīghah al-istimrār*, stands for a continuous action. Allāh (swt) has been sending blessings on His beloved Prophet (ﷺ) since time and will do so for all time. And we, His very humble creatures, have been asked by Allāh (swt) out of sheer mercy towards us, to participate in this great and noblest of acts, that is, to send *ṣalāt* and *salām*. This is the command.

In this age of materialism, a modern thinker has said that "the previous ages were the ages of faith and the present age is the age of doubt," which left an effect on the minds of Muslims who were commissioned by Allāh (swt) to spiritualise every action of their lives. Today, even 'ulamā', speak in terms which belie their allegiance to the spirit of Islam.

We are told by some people that a man is alive only when he is here in this world and that death is a cessation of active or actual life and that we do not know what happens after death. At face value, it appears to be a very simple and noble statement, but it is in fact a cruel statement! This is a direct insult to the comprehensive guidance that is contained in the Holy Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). It is a denial of the nature of life and the nature of death, which Islam gave us, and the matter becomes very serious and unpardonable from the intellectual point of view.

We also find that the latest advances in knowledge prove what our forefathers used to teach and believe but which some of us challenge today. What is this matter which we consider life? What does modern science say about it?

If you want to know what matter and spirit is and what the nature of this universe is and everything in it, including this human body, you will learn from Islam that it is the process of "quality" transforming itself into "quantity". There is something which is called the quantitative aspect of a thing, for example, its mass, density, area, volume, specific gravity, colour and direction. These are all quantitative

measurements. Then there are the qualitative measurements which are inherent in the function of a thing, that is, the end towards it is directed. I am speaking here in terms of philosophy at a very low level – especially to those who are educated in the western lore.

According to Islam, the origin of the entire universe is the process of transformation of quality into quantity. Science and philosophy tries to reduce the concept of God, Allāh (swt), Who is not material nor spiritual or psychical. Allāh (swt) cannot be explained in any terms that we know, for the Qur’ān says:

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

There is nothing like Him.

(Q 112:4)

He is “other than what we know”; He is not matter, not mind, nor soul. What is He then? My reply would be: ‘He is absolute quality and zero quantity’ in terms of philosophy. He is “Quality” and “Not Quantity”. This world is quantitative plus qualitative, and when I say this, I am probably using terms that are terse or clumsy, but allow me to explain further.

Let us go to Einstein with his theory of relativity or the quantum theory. Those who are students of science know about the theory of fundamental particles and the theory of rays in connection with the nature of this world.

There is one equation that was given by Einstein and has been accepted by all the scientists of the world. It is the scientists about whom we are told are sceptical about religion because they want everything on the basis of verifiable knowledge. They want everything to be understood on the basis of the scientific method, the inductive method of inquiry. You know the scientific method, for example, $1 + 4 = 5$; $5 - 4 = 1$; $5 - 1 = 4$, on a very simple level. I would like to invite the attention of those who have started new theories about the personality of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and who wish to deny him that greatness which Allāh (swt) has conferred on him, as well as the materialistically-

oriented Muslims, to Einstein's equation. The equation is: $E=mc^2$, which in simple language means that energy is converted into mass. Energy is something non-material, it is not physical, but mass has physical characteristics.

Let me repeat that according to Islam, the entire universe and every human being is a process of the transformation of quality into quantity. It is originally what Einstein called "energy", and beyond that, which he was not able to find out – finer than energy or pure quality or pure thought, according to the philosophers. The *ṣūfīs*, who were the only truly comprehensively enlightened people of Islam, said that the entire universe is only a manifestation of the attributes of Allāh (swt).

The universe does not exist by itself. We, the *Ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamā'ah*, believe that this world "is neither God himself," for if you say that this universe is part of God, you are committing *shirk*. "It is also not 'other' than God," for if you say that this universe is 'other' than God, you are affirming two entities; something eternal, side by side with God and this is also *shirk*. Thus according to our creed, this world is.

How do we conceive this? The world proceeded as a contingent (accident) under the 'will' of God from God. To simplify it further, the world (universe) originated in the 'Idea' of God. When He willed the world to become tangible and crystallised by undergoing the evolutionary process towards tangibility, it became coarser until it appeared to us in the form of matter, which is tangible and solid.

On one occasion, Einstein was asked: "How did the universe come into existence?" He replied at first that he was not there to observe how this world came into being. He was asked again for his conception about the nature and origin of the world according to the behaviour of matter. Einstein replied: "I believe that the world must have begun as a point of light in intense motion, and this point of light projected itself in terms of extension and became space and its motion projected itself in terms of duration and it became time". This is again something philosophical.

Let us come back to modern physics and ask what is the nature of matter? Unless we understand the nature of matter, we cannot understand the personality of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). I witnessed a happening in Madīnah where a Muslim came to the *Masjid al-nabawi* in Madīnah and had a cane in his hand and in the *Haram* said: “What have I come here for? The Prophet is dead and dry like my stick and gone.” That this fellow could utter this blasphemy inside the *Haram Sharīf*! Had he been a student of science and theology in the real sense of the word, he would never have said this.

In modern science there are two ways of finding out the nature of matter:

- chemical analysis and
- physical analysis.

The process of physical analysis is based on heat. The scientist takes a piece of matter like sodium, iron or anything else, weighs it and takes down all its properties. The piece of iron, for example, is then placed in a hermetically sealed apparatus. The temperature is then increased and the solid becomes liquid, the liquid becomes a gas. The gas turns into flame and the flame becomes molecules. The molecules turn into atoms which becomes intermediate weight particles, then vibrations of light and finally anti-matter. Thus the scientists say that all matter is ultimately anti-matter. Anti-matter is that which is not matter, that is, it is the opposite of matter, for it has no weight, no volume, no area. Let me remind you that according to Islam, this world is “quality” transformed into “quantity”. You must have heard that Allāh (swt) created this world out of absolute *ādam* or sheer non-existence. Anti-matter is the non-existence of matter, and the scientists have reached up to this point in their laboratories. But even this is enough for us to understand what the personality of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is. The different confusions will vanish if we try to understand the nature of his life when he was alive, his passing away or even the passing away of the ordinary human being.

The Holy Qur’ān says that it is a comprehensive guidance in all matters in which human beings need guidance. But what does the Holy Qur’ān say about the creation of the heavens and the earth?

The Holy Qur'ān says:

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

Allāh is the Light of the heavens and the earth.

(Q 24:35)

We don't know in what sense "Light" is referred to here. If we study light, we find that there are different types and categories of light. The coarse light is the light which we see but then there are about twenty-one of these rays such as Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Infra-red, X-rays. The function and constitution of these rays are not the same and the laws that govern each of these rays are different.

Let me tell you about an experiment that was performed in America by Dr George Antimov, who is a member of the U.S. Atomic Commission and became a Muslim at my hands. Dr Antimov operated on one eye of a cat, removed it and reduced it to anti-matter through one foot thick lead with a very narrow aperture. The other eye of the cat was subjected to the vibrations of the anti-matter. The moment these vibrations were exposed to the other eye of the cat, the entire brain of the cat burst.

What is this phenomenon? Energy is convertible into mass, quality is convertible into quantity, anti-matter is convertible to matter and vice versa. Now, let us talk about what life and death is, what this body is and how perishable and non-perishable it is. What is the nature of this body and human existence? The entire view changes. Proceed to find out as to who the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is. It is an extremely vulgar way of saying that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is 'like us'. Only a most ignorant and debased person can say this.

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is matchless. You cannot compare him to any of Allāh's creation. He is not a god, but he is the highest in God's creation. It is not something sectarian – it is the very foundation and spirit of Islam. Take it away and Islam is no more. Everything has a body and a spirit and if the spirit is removed the body is dead. Take away the personality of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) from Islam and it becomes

a lifeless ritual. Allāh (ṣ) does not need rituals but many people unfortunately do not understand this.

Let us go back to the Qur'ān:

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

Allāh is the Light of the heavens and the earth.

(Q 24:35)

According to modern science, everything is reducible to vibrations of light – that light which cannot be seen, but in its nature it can only be called “light”. Then the Creator of this universe must also be called “light”, for light can proceed only from light and not from darkness. The Holy Qur'ān says: Allāh is the Light of the heavens and the earth.

Let us ask the Holy Prophet (ṣ) as to what was happening at that time when this action took place. The Holy Prophet (ṣ) said: There was a stage when Allāh alone existed (the original state).

Then Allāh (swt) willed this world to come into being. The Qur'ān says:

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

When He wills a thing to be, He simply says “Be!” and it becomes.

(Q 36:82)

The process of Allāh's creation is that: *when He wills a thing to be, it simply is, Kun, “Be!” and it becomes*, unlike our method of creation. Allāh (swt) is and the Self-Existent and Self-Subsistent and the Source of all life, the Existent from which life flows.

Try to imagine when the Holy Prophet (ṣ) said:

كَانَ اللَّهُ وَلَا شَيْءٌ قَبْلَهُ

There was Allāh on the one hand and non-existence on the other.

God alone existed. Allāh (swt) is the Light and therefore non-existence is darkness. Then He willed this world to exist and the light of His Will fell on the “canvas” of darkness or non-existence and a point of light was created. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) says:

أَوَّلُ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ نُورِي

The first thing that Allāh created was my light.

How did it take place? Thus when Allāh (swt) wanted to create this universe, He said: “*Kun Muḥammad!*”: These were the first words that echoed in this universe and this point of light came into existence and is called the “*Nur Al-Awwal*” (‘First Light’) in the entire creation. That Light came from Allāh (swt) as it is said in the *ḥadīth*:

أَنَا مِنْ نُورِ اللَّهِ وَالْخَلْقُ كُلُّهُمْ مِنْ نُورِي

I am from the light of God and everything is from my light.

Let me give you a scientific explanation. Take a convex lens and focus it towards the sun. This convex lens, in its nature is cold, it has neither light nor heat, but when it’s exposed to the sun it starts behaving like a sun. In its nature it is not a sun.

When a point of light emerged on the canvas of non-existence as *Nūr Muḥammadī*, it was not that the personality of Allāh (swt) was divided and a portion appeared. Similarly, the personality of the sun is not divided. The sun remains where it is, but its image comes with the same qualities, and this is the ‘*abd-Allāh* – the slave of Allāh!

People say that to be the slave of Allāh is to become debased. On the contrary, to be the slave of Allāh is to absorb blessings from Him! When this convex lens becomes the slave of the sun and focuses itself before the sun it does not become the “‘*abd*” of the sun, nor does it

subject itself to the influences of the sun. It will remain a piece of glass. But the moment it becomes the slave, it focuses itself in a manner whereby it can absorb the rays of the sun and become a miniature sun, giving both light and heat. This is the conception of ‘*ubudiyyah*’ in Islam.

Let me explain this concept of ‘*ubudiyyah*’ further. According to Islamic theology, this ‘First Light’ came into existence and was not Allāh, but from Allāh.

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ

Verily, to you have come he, who is *nūr* from Allāh.

(Q 5:15)

And he is the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). And as Einstein said, it was this point of light, which evolved itself in the entire universe on the tape of extension and duration and became space and time. Similarly, the *ḥadīth* says:

أَنَا مِنْ نُورِ اللَّهِ وَالْخَلْقُ كُلُّهُمْ مِنْ نُورِي

I am from the Light of Allāh and everything is from my light.

What status is this? And what is the purpose of creating this *Nūr Muḥammadī*? Was it in vain? Almighty Allāh is above anything that is vain or meaningless. It has a very great meaning. What is an ‘*abd*’? We say: *wa ash-hadu anna muḥammadan ‘abduhū wa rasūluh*.

Now, as ‘*abduhū*’, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is greater in rank than ‘*rasūluhū*’ and therefore we affirm this first. This personal characteristic as ‘*abduhū*’, is greater in merit than the great function of ‘*rasūluhū*’. Therefore in the *mi‘rāj*, Almighty Allāh uses the word ‘*abdī*’ ‘My servant.’

To become the ‘*abd*’ of Allāh (swt) is to become a king! Not to be debased as some of our people believe! Some people say that they wish to protect the *tawḥīd* and therefore they insult others and even

the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). That *tawhīd* is only a formal and lifeless idea and nothing beyond that.

Iqbāl has said: 'If I become the slave of Allāh and I cannot develop myself in status, then I don't need to be His slave!' Everybody does something for some benefit – it is human nature. If I serve a wealthy human being and he becomes pleased with me, then he converts my poverty into wealth. If he is a possessor of knowledge, then he converts my ignorance into knowledge. What is this 'god' of these people, that you become his 'abd and you continue to become debased! This was not taught by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). This is their own crooked way of thinking, due to ignorance! Let me remind you of a *ḥadīth*, accepted by all the great *imāms*, but not by the 'pygmies' of this era. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) says that Almighty Allāh says:

وَلَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ
 حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ، فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ
 الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ
 وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي
 يَمْشِي بِهَا، وَلَئِنْ سَأَلَنِي لَأُعْطِيَنَّهُ

My servant, when he (or she) accomplishes all the *farā'id* and then seek my nearness through optional virtues, I make him My beloved. And when I come to love him, I become his ears with which he hears, I become his eyes with which he sees, and the hands with which he holds and the feet with which he walks and the tongue with which he speaks.

And Bayhaqi added: '... and the mind with which he thinks.'

This is the way the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) opened the way of Islam to his humble followers. *What* must be the status of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) through whom all these blessings are achieved?

The Qur'ān says that you cannot become the beloved of God, O Muslim until you become slaves of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي

O Prophet, proclaim unto the Muslims: 'if you love Allāh, (tie yourself behind me), imitate me all the time.

(Q 3:31)

What else is slavery? It is the biggest form of slavery, not only to keep your eyes on the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and follow the commands, but also imitate him continuously. You don't imitate anyone unless you are constantly seeing him! And it is for the purpose of seeing him that we say: *yā nabī salām 'alayka*. We want to see him and experience him and therefore we have been taught in the *taḥiyyāt*: *as-salāmu 'alayka ayyuhan-nabiyyu wa raḥmatul-lāhi wa barakātu*.

Thus a person cannot walk the way of becoming beloved of Allāh without becoming a slave of the personality of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). And when the slavery of the Holy Prophet's personality raises a person to the pitch and the status where he becomes what Allāh (swt) says in the *ḥadīth* quoted earlier, I ask you, brothers and sisters, what is the status of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)? This *ḥadīth* does not mean incarnation or *ḥulul* – it means what it means and Allāh knows best. But we can understand from this *ḥadīth* that no sound in this cosmos can be absent from those ears about which Allāh (swt) says: '*I have become his ears.*' And what can be absent from such eyes? And where can those feet go?

Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi (ra) said: 'When a person becomes a slave of God, then, when he speaks, it appears to others that it is his tongue that is speaking, but it is Allāh who is speaking'. If Allāh (swt) could speak through a flame on Mount Sinai: *Allāhu Akbar!* He speaks! Try to speak with Him and you will hear His message. Try to

see Him and your vision will catch the vibrations of His Majesty and His Love!

People ask about the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and how he can be present. These poor, ignorant people do not know. If the slave of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) can transcend space and time, what about the Master? What is this foolish talk? The atheist amongst the scientists can create a machine that can transmit a picture into millions of homes at the same time. How can they insinuate that Allāh (swt) is less efficient than these scientists, *subhān-Allāh*?

Is it human reason to accept that although Allāh (swt) showers His praises on the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) but made him no better than a piece of stone! Have we become so senseless because we are materialistic in our outlook? We are pygmies and therefore we wish to measure the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) with our dwarfish status. Remember, the measure of all things in this universe is only the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), and Allāh (swt) said:

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ

Blessed is the Lord who bestowed his slave with the standard and criterion, al-furqān.

(Q 25:1)

So the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is the standard whereby everything is to be judged here and also on the Day of Judgement.

All praises belong to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 24

Materialism: A Challenge to World Religions

Humanity in this day and age is facing a great predicament. References were made to Vietnam, the Middle East and other parts of the world, where some human beings are ill-treating fellow human beings. I think that what is happening today in this world has been happening in human history all the time. Of course, on some occasions it has been on a small scale, and on other occasions it has been on a larger scale.

It is a tragedy of mankind that although human beings are capable of rising to great heights,(intellectually, morally, spiritually, and socially), they are also capable of going to the lowest depths. It all depends upon their outlook. The present age is definitely the age of doubt, the age of skepticism. Worship as it is being done nowadays is too formal and ritualistic. It is devoid of its spirituality; upon which Truth, Justice and Beauty are based.

South Africa, like any other country, has serious social problems. What is really needed today is a definite, positive and dynamic effort to go back to God, back to those higher values as exemplified by holy personalities that God had sent to various communities of mankind. We all know very well that Islam believes in the Unity of God. But it is not the unity of a tribal god, which favours a particular community.

The verses from the Holy Qur'ān tell us in the very beginning that Allāh is *Rabbul 'Alamin*, the Lord of all the worlds. If this concept is accepted that there is only one God, Creator of this entire universe, including human beings, then alone can human beings cherish the ideal of brotherhood, of the human family. Muslims have to deal with all human beings primarily as human beings because of the honour God bestows upon them. The Holy Qur'ān states:

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ

God has honoured the children of Adam. (Q. 17: 70). Every human being is honorable. The Qur'ān further teaches that all human beings are potentially free and equal. This freedom and equality can be withdrawn if humans do not behave with dignity. It is natural for a human being to respect the merits of another human being, and to excel one another in goodness. They should see good in other human beings, and avoid the spirit of hatred, jealousy, and contempt for others. Humans should prove through their moral actions that they are worthy of the honour granted them.

But what is happening today? On the one hand we conform to the formalities of religion, and on the other, we follow a materialistic philosophy of life. And this philosophy has its history: Nietzsche and Freud were the products of their age. But how did this type of revolt against religion come about? It came about because of the errors of the protagonists of religion. Revolt always comes when there are injustices and hypocrisy.

The immorality in our society is due to the shortcomings of those who say that salvation lies in religion. This salvation has to be shown, to be proved and brought right here on the face of this earth. If we are Christians, we should stand in the real spirit of Jesus Christ (as); if we are Muslims, we should stand in the real spirit of the holy Prophet Muhammad (s); if we are Jews we should stand in the real

spirit of Prophet Moses (as) and Prophet Abraham (as). If we do not do it, and just carry labels, naturally, other ideologies are bound to emerge.

Although I disagree with Karl Marx, he was more honest than other intellectuals. The philosophy of materialism was holding sway in the western world; Marx brought it to its logical conclusion. In the western world capitalism was ruling the roost and man was exploiting man. Marx was the one to address the problem of capitalistic injustice. If these circumstances and conditions were not present, there would have not been a Karl Marx. As we all know, action and reaction are equal and opposite. Consequently, the capitalistic extreme of social injustice gave birth to the extreme of communism. That extreme emerged as the Marxist socio-economic philosophy, which even challenged religion and the church.

The followers of communism did not become followers because they loved Karl Marx's philosophy, rather they felt that it was a way out of their misery. Here, it is wrong to say that Christianity teaches something against human interest. Rather, it teaches the highest morality, but it is for its followers to practise it. If they had done so, Marxist materialism would not have existed and challenged the higher values of all religions. The founder of materialism is Darwin, whose theory of mechanical causation was followed by later materialistic thinkers. This resulted in what we have at present in the Western world.

What do we find in this so-called free world today? If you find the scientific materialism of Karl Marx in these communist countries of the Soviet Union and China and elsewhere, you will find philosophical materialism ruling the roost in all communistic countries. The consequences are that in spite of the best efforts from the side of believers in God, which are to be found in all these countries, materialism is advancing continuously. And if this is the case, the morals of the people are being shaped accordingly. When the faith in God is gone, and people even say, 'God is dead', one can never even accept humanity to believe logically, in the absoluteness of moral values. On the basis of materialism and its philosophy, the only social order that can emerge is the permissive society, which we now find all over the world.

If the philosophy of materialism is correct, then man should exploit man because according to that philosophy there is no moral bond of unity between human beings. For if a human being is only a biological automaton with no psyche and no soul - in other words, if I am only an animal, then all talk of truth, justice, beauty, righteousness and honesty is not for such beings. These values can only be for those who are moral beings living on some other planet or God's good heaven. But if I am only an animal or physical being, then my ideals should be "eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die", and this is what our young ones in this permissive society are trying to do. They are, of course, very rational.

Let those who believe in God come forward and convince them to change their way of life. Otherwise even if you take the rod in your hand, it is not going to help; it will only make matters worse. It is the motto of materialism that presently rules the world.

The other motto is: "Everyone unto himself and the devil takes the hindmost". What else do we see in this materialistic world? Worship of God is only a lip service. We see the occasional worship of God, which is more of a social ritual. The innocent youth will naturally become part of the permissive society. This is the logical outcome of that movement against God on behalf of materialism, which started centuries ago, and which is becoming a challenge to all Muslims, Christians, Hindus or Jews. Let them come forward and face this challenge; otherwise drug addiction, hippies and other distorted varieties will grow at an alarming rate. We may hear the cry, 'come to God' from the churches, the mosques, the temples and the synagogues, but humanity will not take heed.

Consequently, what these great teachers taught is to practise what we preach. Let us not only deliver sermons as a past-time and part-time job. This work has got to be done and this is my mission. My mission is to go from country to country and raise the call to "Discover God again" and establish with Him not a formalistic or theological form of belief, but a real vibrant, dynamic and living faith in Him. Live in Him, live for Him and live by Him. Only when this army of godly persons emerges on the scene, then this hydra-headed monster of

materialism and permissive society will vanish. There is, unfortunately, no short cut.

There are four basic principles that Muslims should practise:

- 1 - You cannot be godly if you are selfish.
- 2 - If you love God, love the human beings. The holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) has proclaimed: *"All creation is God's family; he who honours God's family, honours God, and he who insults God's family insults God"*
- 3 - Deal with every human being firstly as a human being, not as a Muslim, Christian or Jew, etc. Every one of you is a human being first and foremost. This is what Islam has emphasized. There are inviolable rights for every human being and if you cannot stand by those rights, you are insulting your own humanity.
- 4 - Appreciate good wherever it is to be found, even in your enemy. Hate evil but not the evildoer. May I remind the Muslims that the Holy Qur'an bears witness to it, for in Suratul Kahf we are told that the holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) had such a tremendous amount of affection for his enemies that Allah (swt) warned him in the Holy Qur'an: (S18: 6)

فَلَعَلَّكَ بَخِيعُ نَفْسِكَ عَلَىٰ أَثَرِهِمْ إِن لَّمَّ
يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا

Because these enemies of yours are not coming to the path of salvation, this sorrow and grief for them which is based on your love for them, may even take away your life (Q. 18:6).

This is the Islamic principle of goodwill. Goodwill for all and ill will towards none. Goodwill for all, irrespective of whether they are Muslim or Christian etc. This is not merely a moral theoretical principle. They have been personified by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and his followers. He preached to the Arabs for 13 years in Mecca. He and his followers were persecuted by his enemies, then he migrated with his followers to Medina proclaiming to his enemies

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ *To you your way of life and to me mine*” (Q. 109: 6). But in spite of this, they sent their armies to invade Medina a number of times. Despite these persecutions, when the Prophet entered Mecca, and all these enemies were brought before him, he asked them, “You know what you have done to me and my followers for the past 22 years, what do you think I will do to you today?” They appealed for mercy. They knew he was the personification of love and mercy. They said: “Thou art a good brother”, this was the Arab idiom, the appeal for mercy. The Prophet said, “Yes, I am.” And thus I will say to you what Joseph said to his brothers: (S12:92)

قَالَ لَا تَثْرِيبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ
وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

You are free, no punishment will be inflicted on you this day”, (when the power is in my hand and you deserve punishment.) May Allāh forgive you your sins and He is the most Merciful. (Q. 12:92)

Muslims! You are the followers of Muhammad (ﷺ), are you behaving towards one another like that? Leave aside how you might be behaving towards other communities, I am asking you, “Are you really behaving towards one another like that? If not, how can God consider you as the followers of Muhammad (ﷺ)?” A criminal cannot withstand the impact of the forces of moral integrity. If anyone is committing an injustice towards you, repel it with good, as Jesus Christ preached: “If anyone smiteth thee on thy right cheek, present him the left cheek also.” This is how you meet the challenge of evil with good. And the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) demonstrated the same thing in word and deed, and he commanded in the words of the Holy Qur’an:

ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةِ

“Repel evil with good” (Q: 23: 96)

Good and evil are not of the same category; fight darkness with light and not darkness with darkness. Therefore, always meet the challenge of evil with good. So whatever may be the evil with which you may be confronted as individuals and as communities, I would emphasize, let the good come from your side. If your neighbor is doing evil to you, respond with good. The challenge of your moral integrity will destroy the evil without shedding a drop of blood. My dear friends, humanity is passing through very big crises, and the international situation is becoming more and more complicated. Backward nations, developing nations, and this human community are all divided at different levels. These problems are there because the values of Truth, Justice and Beauty have been lost. All the noble teachings of the great masters of mankind, throughout the different ages have been relegated in the background, and we have followed the code of expediency. Expediency is selfish and cannot provide social stability.

Therefore, the message to the Muslims and all the rest of humanity is: **Return to God genuinely.** And obtain from Him the light to dispel darkness. Otherwise this darkness will continue and consume wherever you will find it. Materialism has spread its tentacles all over, covering every facet of human life. Perhaps it is not too late; so let us act now, otherwise it will be too late. The impact of materialism may lead to a world-wide nuclear war; and the atom bombs and hydrogen bombs will be blind to the race or community it is aimed at. May Allāh bless and protect you all.

All praise be to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

CHAPTER 25

The Talismanic Science of *Ta'wiz*: Fact or Superstition

To understand whether *ta'wiz* is Islamic or not, and whether it has any power or influence, you need to perform the exercise given to the Sufi novice which is to keep a large mirror in front of you, and read certain *Asma'* (Names) of Allāh (swt) with your gaze fixed on your face. After a period of time, your image on the mirror will split into numberless copies. In these copies you will find five divisions, which demonstrate that this human personality is composed of five shells. The bodily shell, the electronic shell, the psychical shell, the astro-psychical shell, the astral shell and then the soul. The soul appears as a center of light in intense motion, around which are five shells.

The physical shell is governed by bodily things; if it is sick, you use herbs or medicines to treat it. If the electronic shell is sick, electronised medicines are administered. The psychical shell applies to the mind alone, which is the key to treating the psyche, which in turn is the cure for even physical ailments.

Then there is the psycho-astral shell, which is governed by certain symbols. Certain symbols, such as talisman, five- pointed star or a

letter *waw*, etc. They are used to influence the human personality at the psycho-astral shell.

The fifth shell – the astral shell – is governed by numbers only. If you know how to employ numbers, which have certain qualities, you can influence the astral shell. Shaykh Ibn al-‘Arabi has given value to numbers, and Arabic letters. With the science of numbers which originated by Muslims, hidden things can be predicted accurately and the relationship between numbers, time, day, etc. can be determined.

The science of *ta’wiz* has been developed since the early period of Islam and it is always based on a verse from the Holy Qur’ān or some prayer. For example; “*Rabbana hablana min ladunka rahma*”, which is a prayer for divine Mercy and its numerical value is calculated according to the *Abjad* system. That whole number is then divided into 16, 10 or 8 or 5. The numbers are written in a special form or formula and given to a person and it works. Numbers govern the astral shell of the human personality.

Similarly in the field of physical science, numbers are tangible. We have heard of voice activation – switching something on or off by means of your voice or sound. These mysteries are disclosing themselves. Another example is the Telstar satellite system where you can communicate with one another all over the world. Perhaps in five years time a system will develop where the picture of the person you are talking to appears on a screen before you. The computer, a wonder of the modern age, is actually a play of numbers.

A person who knows the science of *ta’wiz*, may use it, but most people who write out *ta’wiz* know nothing about it, and do it with the wrong motive. Some may do it to establish themselves as Shaykhs of a *tariqah* or to make money. Such impure motives will render the *ta’wiz* valueless.

Ta’wiz is a science handed over from teacher to student; and only to those students whom the teacher has confidence and trust in.

An effective *ta'wiz* is one that is written by an authentic Shaykh and done only for the sake of Allāh (swt). Whosoever has any ulterior motive, is not a man of true talismanic science.

CHAPTER 26

Jesus (Nabi ‘Isa) (As) – Dead or Alive?

Whether Jesus is dead or alive is of secondary importance; more important is to believe that he is the Prophet of God. Followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad give much attention to the death of Jesus, and they believe that Ghulam Ahmad has come down as the promised Messiah. The Jews believe that Jesus was crucified. They affirm this on the basis of the Old Testament, where it is said: “He who is crucified is accursed.” So in order to prove (Allāh forbid) that Jesus was an *accursed person*, they were insistent that they have crucified or killed him. Christians have the theory of atonement through crucifixion, original sin, etc. It was from this point of view that they insisted that Jesus was crucified and after that he rose from the dead, etc. So both Jews and Christians say that death has come to Jesus.

If Jesus really died, then the Holy Qur’ān would have stated it in very clear terms; instead we read:

وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَٰكِن شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ
لَفِي شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا أَنْبَاعُ الظَّنِّ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا

“But they killed him not, nor crucified him, but it was so made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no certain knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, but of a surety they killed him not. (Q4:157)

If he was really dead, the Qur’ān would have declared it in clear terms. Why was this not stated clearly that he died? The natural law is:

إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ مَّيِّتُونَ

“Truly thou wilt die and they are going to die”. (Q39:30).

This verse is in connection with the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), but no such statement is said about Jesus. The consensus is that Allah (swt) has caused him to remain alive; but no one knows where or how. But he will return and continue the message of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).

Now the question arises as to how it is possible that a person may live for 2000 years or more. This is irrelevant. One baby is born and dies one minute after birth; another lives for another 100 years? Now build up a ratio for the baby that lived one minute and a person that lived 100 years? There is no fixed ratio. So if it is possible for a person to live here for 100 years, what impossibility is there for a person to live 1000 or 2000 years?

According to medical science; a person's age depends upon the hormonal efficiency, etc. There is no immutable law that states that you can only live 60, 70 or 100 years. Recently I met a Sheikh of the Qadiriyyah order who was 150 years old. Another point : Why did Allāh Almighty select a Messenger whose birth and death are unnatural? Now in the case of Jesus there are two abnormalities:

There are certain biological organisms that are self-fertilising. Within pregnancy the male sperm fertilises the female ovum and the product is the zygote or clot, and it then expands, etc. (By the way, in the case of cloning the male sperm is ignored completely). Now, if there is a human female, who produces a male sperm in her body, conception will take place. Now, if this is not impossible, then the virgin birth of Jesus can also be considered as possible. I personally believe that the virgin birth of Jesus and his long life are inter-connected. Allāh (swt) created him in this fashion to give him a more powerful harmonic and glandular structure, which would survive for a longer period than us ordinary human beings. Now, why was this done in this case? The Qur'ān tells us clearly:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَآءَآتَيْتُكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ
ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ، وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ،

Remember the occasion when Allāh (swt) made a covenant with the Prophets (other than Muḥammad (ṣ)). Certainly, I bless you with the Book and wisdom". Then after that will come to you the messenger and he will verify the truth you will be sent with. Verily you should believe in him and help him (Q. 3: 81).

What is this **لَتُؤْمِنَنَّ بِهِ** ? Believe in the fact that he is the cause of the creation of this entire universe, and he is your leader, and you are to work for his mission all over the world. As the central figure in God's creation he will come and proclaim:

"I am because of the light Divine and everything has come into existence because of my light"

However, Allāh (swt) selected the one Prophet, who was the last Prophet before the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ), and gave him this miraculous form of birth and long life that he may establish his mission and assist in the mission of the Holy Prophet (ṣ). For this purpose he was chosen to emerge in this time and age again directly.

Thus it is accepted that Sayyidina 'Isa(as) is alive in bodily condition somewhere, (Allāh knows best) waiting for the command of Allāh to re-emerge here.

GLOSSARY



- ‘Abd (عَبْدٌ) – (pl. ‘ibād; ‘ābidūn) one who serves Allāh
Adhān (أَذَانٌ) – call to the supreme act of worship
Akbar (أَكْبَرُ) – a divine attribute, the Greatest
Ākhirah (آخِرَةُ) – judgement; eternal consummation of judgement in paradise or hell
‘Alayhi al-salām (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) – “upon him be the blessing of Allāh,” said whenever a Prophet other than Muḥammad is mentioned by name
Allāh (اللَّهُ) – the name of the divine majesty
Allāhu akbar (اللهُ أَكْبَرُ) – “Allāh is greater than all”
Aqīdah (عَقِيدَةٌ) – doctrine
Astaghfiru Allāh (أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ) – “I ask Allāh for forgiveness.”
Āyah (آيَةٌ) – (pl. āyāt) a verse from the Qur’ān; a phenomenon pointing to the creator



- Barakah (بَرَكَتٌ) – grace; blessing
Bāṭil (بَاطِلٌ) – the false in the theoretical sense, and the evil or wrong in the practical
Bay‘ah (بَيْعَةٌ) – the nomination of the *khalīfah* by the leaders of the *ummah*, or the seconding of that nomination by the members of the *ummah* at large; the covenant the first muslims of madīnah entered into with the Prophet (ṣ), giving him their obedience, allegiance and protection
Bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm (بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ) – “in the Name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful;” said at the beginning of any activity

D

Dār al-‘Amal (دَارُ الْعَمَلِ) – the abode of good deeds

Dīn (دِينُ) – the normative or perfect religion which Allāh ordained for humanity, including faith, ethics, law, devotions, institutions and judgement

Du‘ā’ (دُعَا) – any invocation or prayer addressed to Allāh

Dunyā (دُنْيَا) – the lower values of this world, when compared to the other world; life dedicated to the pursuit of such values

Dhikr (ذِكْرُ) – the remembrance of Allāh or His presence in the consciousness of humankind

F

Fiqh (فِقْهُ) – knowledge of Islām through its laws; science of the laws of Islam

G

Ghawth (غَوْثُ) – within ṣūfī hierarchy he is the one person who forms the focus of Allāh’s supervision of the world in every age

H

Ḥadīth (حَدِيثُ) – (pl. aḥādīth) the verbalized form of a tradition of the Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) constitutive of his *Sunnah*

Ḥajj (حَجُّ) – the fifth pillar of Islam, consisting of *niyyah*, *iḥrām*, *ṭawāf*, *wuqūf*, *adḥiyah* and *rajm* – acts performed at Makkah on the ninth and tenth days of Dhul-Ḥijjah, the last month of the lunar calendar

Ḥalāl (حَلَالٌ) – that which Allāh has made legitimate

Al-ḥamdu lillāh (الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ) – “praise and thanksgiving to Allāh,” said at the termination of any activity

Al-Ḥaqq (الْحَقُّ) – a divine name, the ultimately true, the ultimately righteous, the ultimately real; the quality of the ultimate truth,

righteousness and reality

Ḥarām (حَرَامٌ) – that which Allāh has explicitly forbidden humans to do and for which he specified a penalty

Al-Ḥayy (الْحَيُّ) – a divine name, the Everliving

Hijrah (هِجْرَةٌ) – the departure of the Prophet Muḥamad (ﷺ) from Makkah to Yathrib (later known as Madīnah); designation for the Islāmic lunar calendar which began on the day of that departure from Makkah (July 622 AC)

Ḥikmah (حِكْمَةٌ) – wisdom based on revelation of the Will of Allāh

Hudā (هُدًى) – divine guidance or revelation of Islām



‘Ibādah (عِبَادَةٌ) – the act of serving Allāh

Iḥsān (إِحْسَانٌ) – the perfect fulfillment of the commandments of Allāh; the state of the person whose deeds achieve such fulfillment

Ikhlāṣ (إِخْلَاصٌ) – the state of sincerity, conviction, loyalty to Allāh and commitment to His Will

‘Ilm (عِلْمٌ) – knowledge of the patterns of Allāh in creation, which are constitutive of reality. In nature it includes the natural and “exact” sciences; in the personal realm, the “humanities”; in the social realm, the “social” sciences

Īmām (إِمَامٌ) – community leader in religious as well as in lay matters

Īmān (إِيْمَانٌ) – the conviction, or certainty, that Allāh is indeed the one and only God and that Muḥammad (ﷺ) is His last prophet

Inna lillāhi wa innailayhi rāji‘ūn (إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ) – “we belong to Allāh and to him we shall all return, said whenever one meets with tragedy, loss or sorrow)

Inshā’ Allāh (إِنْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ) – “if Allāh will,” said whenever one refers to the future

Iqāmah (إِقَامَةٌ) – the inception of ṣalāh or any other ritual of worship

Isrā’ (إِسْرَاءُ) – nocturnal journey of Muḥammad (ﷺ) to Al Quds

(Jerusalem) and return to Makkah

‘Izzah (عِزَّةٌ) – the high position belonging to Allāh, to his prophet and to the Muslims in their respective realms (63:8)

J

Jahannam (جَهَنَّمَ) – the eternal fire which is the ultimate recompense of the life of disobedience and sin

Jāhiliyyah (جَاهِلِيَّةٌ) – the order or regime in which the law of Allāh is not in force; pre-Islāmic Arabia

Jannah (جَنَّةٌ) – the garden, paradise; the eternal abode of the meritorious humans who have been granted the reward of Allāh on the day of judgement

Jibrīl (جِبْرِيلُ) – the angel entrusted with conveying the revelation to the Prophet (ﷺ)

Jihād (جِهَادٌ) – self-exertion in the cause of Allāh including peaceful as well as violent means

K

Kāfir (كَافِرٌ) – (pl. kāfirūn) one who disbelieves

Karāmāt (كَرَامَاتُ) – gifts or powers of a spiritual nature acquired by a saint

Khulafā’ al-Rāshidūn (خُلَفَاءُ الرَّاشِدِينَ) – Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthman and ‘Ali are called the rightly guided

Khalīfah (خَلِيفَةٌ) – (pl. khulafā’, khalā’if) the vicegerent of Allāh in space-time

Al-Kitāb (الْكِتَابُ) – The Qur’ān

Kufr (كُفْرٌ) – the act of declaring solemnly one's disbelief

L

Lā ilāha illā allāh (لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ) – “there is no god but Allāh”

M

- Malā'ikah (مَلَائِكَةُ) – angels; celestial beings
- Masjid (مَسْجِدٌ) – place where act of prostration is performed, often rendered as “mosque”
- Maṣlaḥah (مَصْلَحَةٌ) – public welfare
- Mi'rāj (مِعْرَاجٌ) – ascension of the Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) to heaven in 3 AH/619 AC
- Al-Muḥyi (الْمُحْيِيُّ) – a divine name, He who causes to live
- Muddaththir (مُدَثِّرٌ) – a name of the Prophet Muhammad (ṣ), “the one covered with his mantle,” as Allāh called him in the Qur'ān (74:1)
- Muḥyi al-Dīn (مُحْيِيُّ الدِّينِ) – reviver of religion
- Mu'adhdhin (مُؤَذِّنٌ) – the person who makes the call to prayer (*adhān*)
- Mu'min (مُؤْمِنٌ) – (pl. mu'minūn) the male who possesses *īmān*
- Mu'minah (مُؤْمِنَةٌ) – (pl. mu'mināt) the female who possesses *īmān*
- Mu'jizah (مُعْجِزَةٌ) – miracles attributed to prophets and divine messengers
- Muhājir (مُهَاجِرٌ) – (pl. muhājirūn) whoever undertakes to transfer himself/herself spatially for the sake of Islām
- Munāfiq (مُنَافِقٌ) – hypocrite
- Muṣallī (مُصَلِّيٌ) – one who makes the prayers (*ṣalāh*)
- Mushrik (مُشْرِكٌ) – (pl. *mushrikūn*) the person who practices or believes in shirk
- Muslim (مُسْلِمٌ) – the proper designation of the person who adheres to Islām
- Muwaḥḥidīn (مُوَحِّدِينَ) – unitarians; believers in one God
- Muzzammil (مُزْمَلٌ) – a name of the Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) “the one enwrapped,” as Allāh called him in the Qur'ān (73:1)

N

- Nabī (نَبِيٌّ) – (pl. anbiyā') the one whose prophethood consists of receiving verbatim a message from Allāh with the express order to convey

it to the people and to exemplify its precepts in his own life

Q

Qiblah (قِبْلَةُ) – the direction of Makkah

Qiblah al-Awwal (قِبْلَةُ الْأَوَّلَى) – Jerusalem

R

Rabb (رَبُّ) – a divine name, loving lord and commanding master; used in the possessive form of rabbī (my lord), rabbanā (our master) for invocational purposes

Raḍīy allāhu ‘anhū / ‘anhā / ‘anhum (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ/عَنْهَا/عَنْهُمْ) – “may Allāh be pleased with him/her/them,” said whenever a Companion of the prophet is mentioned by name

Al-Rahīm (الرَّحِيمُ) – a divine name, the Always Merciful

Al-Raḥmān (الرَّحْمَنُ) – a divine name, the Merciful

Raḥmah allāh ‘alayh / ‘alayhā / ‘alayhim (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ/عَلَيْهَا/عَلَيْهِمْ) – “may Allāh's mercy fall upon him/her/them,” said whenever the departed muslim is mentioned by name

Rasūl (رَسُولٌ) – denoting the one devoted to *risālah*, name of Prophet

Muḥammad (ﷺ)

Rizq (رِزْقٌ) – what Allāh grants humanity from his material bounty

Al-Rāziq (الرَّازِقُ) – a divine name, He who grants *rizq*

Rukū‘ (رُكُوعٌ) – bowing in *ṣalāh*

S

Ṣāliḥāt (صَالِحَاتُ) – (pl. of ṣāliḥah) the good works called for by Allāh to be done by men and women

Ṣalāh (صَلَاةٌ) – the act of worship in Islām

Al-salāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatu allāh (السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) – “may the

blessings and mercy of Allāh be upon you,”

Ṣidq (صِدْق) – v.n. of *ṣadaqah*, which means to accept the veracity and supreme value of the cause of Islām and to remain true to it in practice
Ṣaḥīḥ (صَحِيح) – any of the six collections of *aḥādīth* widely regarded as trustworthy – namely those of Bukhārī, Muslim, Sijistānī, Tirmidhī, Nasā’ī and Ibn Mājah

Sajada (سَجَدَ) – to prostrate oneself, forehead, knees and palms touching the floor, in worship of Allāh

Ṣalāh al-nāfilah (صَلَاةٌ نَافِلَةٌ) – *ṣalāh* which the *Sharī’ah* regards as commendable but not obligatory

Salām (سَلَام) – the peace of Allāh, his greeting and blessing

Ṣallā allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) – “may the peace and blessing of Allāh be upon him,” said whenever the name of the Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) is mentioned, or whenever he is referred to as the Prophet of Allāh

Shafā’ah (شَفَاعَةٌ) – intercession with Allāh

Shajarah (شَجَرَةٌ) – lit. tree, but in sufism refers to the Perfect Man

Shahīd (شَهِيدٌ) – (pl. shuhadā’) the martyr who falls in the cause of Allāh

Shahādah (شَهَادَةٌ) – to witness that there is no god but Allāh and that Muḥammad is his prophet, servant and messenger

Sharī’ah (شَرِيعَةٌ) – the collective name for all the laws of Islām, including its religious and liturgical, ethical and jurisprudential systems

Shirk (شِرْكٌ) – association of other beings with Allāh; opposite of *tawḥīd*

Shūrā (شُورَى) – the consultative representational form of government, ordered by Allāh (3:159; 42:38) and practiced by the Prophet (ṣ) and the *Khulafā’ Rāshidūn* after him

Subḥana Allāh (سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ) – “may Allāh be praised”

Subḥānahu wa ta ‘ālā (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) – “may he be praised and may his transcendence be affirmed”

Sujūd (سُجُودٌ) – prostration in *ṣalāh* allowing the forehead to touch the floor

Sunnah (سُنَّةٌ) – the pattern of Allāh in ordering creation or any part or aspect of it; the path or example of the Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ),

consisting of all that he said, did, approved of, or condemned

T

Taqwā (تَقْوَةٌ) – the combination of piety, faith, loyalty, commitment called for in Islām

Tazkiyah (تَزْكِيَةٌ) – purification of the human personality

Thawāb (ثَوَابٌ) – the reward granted by Allāh on the day of judgement

U

Ummah (أُمَّةٌ) – the community as identified by its ideology, law, religion and group consciousness, ethics and mores, culture and art

Umm al-Mu'minīn (أُمُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ) – Mother of the Believers; a title given to each of the wives of the Prophet, but used in particular for 'Ā'shah

W

Waḥīy (وَحْيٌ) – verbatim revelation of a verse or more containing a message from Allāh to the prophet

Wuḍū' (وُضُوءٌ) – ablutions

Y

Yaqīn (يَقِينٌ) – apodeictic certainty of the truth of Islām and its claims

Z

Zakāh (زَكَاةٌ) – the obligatory sharing of wealth with the poor and the community at the yearly rate of 2.5% of appropriated wealth above a certain minimum